Gloria names Corona, Martinez to Supreme Court

STORY ON PAGE A2

GMA's bad-hair day

NAG E-EMOTE LANG AKO!

By Carlito Pablo

WHAT'S eating President Macapagal-Arroyo?

TV viewers were moved to ask this question as they watched her, dour-faced, go through the paces of an interview with the Australian

GMA'S/A16

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

IMF lauds Macapagal handling of economy

By Elena R. Torrijos

INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund directors yesterday lauded the Macapagal administration for the way it has managed the Philippine economy. But they tempered their praise with an urgent call for the government to undertake more critical reforms. In particular, the IMF said vig-

IMF/A16

e-mail: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Thursday, April 11, 2002 ★ 40 pages / 3 sections / vol.17 / no. 122 P15
website: www.inq7.net

Gloria rating down in latest SWS survey

Spent force? Erap trust rating plunges to minus 15

By Carlito Pablo

NET public satisfaction with the performance of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the first quarter of the year fell markedly, from 27 points to 16. But the polling firm that conducted the latest nationwide survey emphasized that "political support for the administration remains healthy."

The Social Weather Stations said its March 2002 survey had found "no sign of (the) transfer of public sympathy to the opposition." Indeed, deposed President Joseph Estrada's unfavorable net trust ratings doubled from –7 in November to –15 in March.

Conducted between March 4 and 23, the poll found 48 percent of the public satisfied with the President's performance and 32 percent dissatisfied, giving her a net satisfaction rating of 16 (satisfied minus dissatisfied).

In contrast, during the Nov. 3-21, 2001 survey, a statistical majority of the public (53 percent) declared themselves satisfied, versus 26 percent dissatisfied, giving her a net rating then of 27.

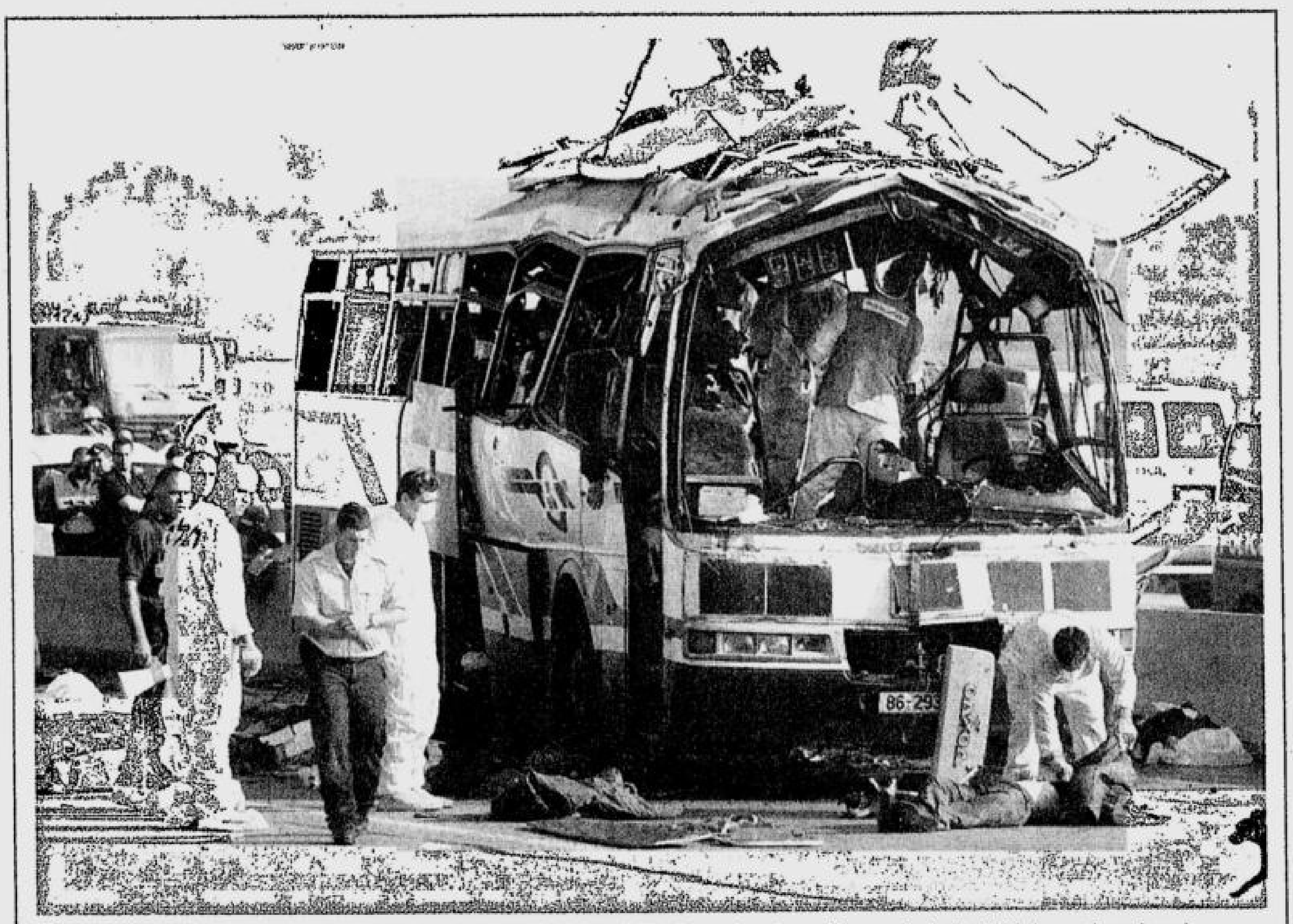
In Malacañang, Press Secretary Rigoberto Tiglao said Ms Macapagal welcomed the recent SWS survey as "another reminder that we have to intensify our efforts to create an economic environment that generates jobs, especially for the poorest."

The SWS said the President's March net rating of 16 was "back to being moderately positive again, close to its 2001 average."

The downtrend was shared by all key personalities and institutions included in the survey. The net satisfaction rating of Vice President Teofisto Guingona fell from 12 to 11, that of Senate President Franklin Drilon from 39 to 25, and that of Speaker Jose de Venecia from 19 to 15.

The net satisfaction rating of the national administration

GLORIA/A16



TEN were killed here including the suicide bomber, and 20 injured. The Jerusalem-bound bus exploded in Haifa in northern Israel.

AFP

Suicide bomber kills 10 in bus

13 Israeli soldiers die in trap

JERUSALEM—A suicide bomber blew up a crowded bus near the port city of Haifa in northern Israel during the morning rush hour yesterday, killing up to 10 people and casting a deep shadow on the peace mission of US Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The military wing of the Islamic resistance movement Hamas claimed responsibility for the first suicide bombing in nine days.

The blast came as Israel was already reeling from the deaths of 13 soldiers on Tuesday in an ambush in the northern West Bank refugee camp at Jenin. It was the deadliest strike against Israeli troops in 18 months of conflict—unfolded with split-second precision as a booby trap exploded, a suicide bomber blew himself up and gunmen opened fire from rooftops.

The army said two groups of Israeli soldiers were walking on separate streets in Jenin's narrow alleyways when one of them wandered into an area booby-trapped with explosive charges.

The other group was hit in a "simultaneous attack" with gunfire from several directions. At the same time, a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up, most likely near the first group.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon responded to the double loss with an emotional pledge that Israel would fight the Palestinians to the finish despite mounting US pressure to halt its drive.

"This battle is a battle for the survival of the Jewish people and the state of Israel," public radio quoted Sharon as saying.

The Haifa blast tore a hole through the roof of the Jerusalem-bound bus. Hospital officials put the death toll at nine, including the bomber. At least 17 other people were reported wounded.

SUICIDE/A15

ROMY GACAD, AFP

DRAPED with a Palestinian flag, Jordanian businessman Mohammad Eshshehadeh and daughter Mona join the picket at the Israeli Embassy in Makati.

PCGG set to refile case against De Venecia

By Donna S. Cueto

THE LANDOIL issue has returned to haunt House Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government is set to refile a civil case against De Venecia and Land Oil Resources Corp. for the company's failure to comply with a 1988 compromise agreement requiring it to transfer to the government $700 million in shares of stock and insurance damage claims of Landoil.

PCGG Commissioner Victoria Avena said the cases against Landoil and De Venecia would be revived as the firm had repeatedly ignored demand letters of the PCGG to comply with the deed of assignment or compromise agreement entered into by Landoil with the PCGG on July 19, 1988.

For 15 years until 1985, De Venecia was president of Landoil, a company that undertook construction projects in the Middle East and allegedly obtained behest loans amounting to $120 million. Its receivables from the Middle East for its construction and other projects amounted to about $169 million, according to the Deed of Assignment.

PCGG/A16

Labor Day on April 29? Workers upset

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Blanche S. Rivera

IS nothing sacred anymore? Not when it comes to Malacañang's "holiday economics."

For the first time, Filipino workers will be working on May 1, Labor Day, which falls on a Wednesday this year. The traditional worldwide non-working holiday will instead be observed on April 29, a Monday, thus giving Filipino families another long weekend.

Protesting militant groups said that the Philippines will be the only country in the world observing Labor Day ahead of schedule.

Press Secretary Rigoberto Tiglao said it was the administration's new policy to move to Monday all official holidays falling in the middle of the week, except Christmas and New Year's Day.

He said this was in keeping with the policy of promoting

LABOR/A16

ERIK ARAZAS

SAAN KA MAN NAROROON . . . The Poet of Philippine Music, National Artist Levi Celerio, takes center stage at the Cultural Center of the Philippines where his remains lie in state for the necrological rites before his state funeral on Wednesday.

Davao bishop backs PNP chief, not priest

By the PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—Contradicting the kidnap victim himself, a bishop and a negotiator, Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla claimed that Fr. Giuseppe "Beppe" Pierantoni was rescued without payment of ransom.

Capalla said Director General Leandro Mendoza, Philippine National Police chief, had narrated to him how the Italian priest was rescued.

"He (Mendoza) said it was a combination of community cooperation, good intelligence, the element of secrecy, and opportunity," Capalla said in a statement faxed to the INQUIRER.

But Mendoza said on the day Pierantoni walked to freedom that the members of the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom gang abandoned the Italian priest after sensing that the police were closing in on them.

The INQUIRER tried to talk to Capalla about his statement but could not locate him. It was Capalla who tried to broker a deal on the coconut levy funds last September between coconut farmers, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco and Zamboanga City Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat of the Cocofed.

DAVAO/A15

'Very positive' news for RP vets

By Jennie Ilustre
PDI Washington correspondent

WASHINGTON—US President George W. Bush is expected to respond swiftly and positively to the appeal of President Macapagal-Arroyo to "show a determined lead in obtaining legislation on behalf of our veterans . . . without delay."

Ms Macapagal, noting the 60th anniversary of the Fall of Bataan, had written Bush a letter dated April 3.

Next week, Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony J. Principi will meet with Ms Macapagal to discuss a pending bill in the US Congress authored by recent Malacañang visitor Sen. Daniel K. Inouye. If approved by the US Congress, the bill would grant health and pension

VERY/A15

MAYROON NAMANG REKOMENDASYON NG JBC

Corona, Martinez to SC

By Dona Pazzibugan

AS expected, President Macapagal-Arroyo appointed her chief of staff and longtime trusted aide, Renato Corona, to one of two vacancies in the Supreme Court.

The other slot went to Court of Appeals Presiding Justice Ma. Alicia Austria Martinez.

The President signed the appointments late Tuesday but Press Secretary Rigoberto Tiglao announced them only yesterday.

Tiglao said the President had acted on the recommendation of the Judicial and Bar Council.

Corona topped the JBC's shortlist, getting the unanimous vote of all its nine members.

Martinez was one of those who tied for second place.

Corona and Martinez will replace SC Associate Justices Bernardo Pardo and Arturo Buena who retired on Feb. 11 and March 25, respectively.

Bias feared

Interviewed last night, Corona said the President had informed him of her decision on Tuesday night.

He and Martinez are to be sworn in tomorrow.

Corona allayed opposition fears that he would be naturally biased for the administration, having been the chief aide of Ms Macapagal when was still vice president and her first presidential spokesperson.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel has charged that Corona's closeness to the President would affect his impartiality.

"He does not understand that I was not recommended by the executive branch, but by the JBC which is under the judicial branch," he said.

The JBC is composed of members of Congress, retired SC and CA justices, the academe and Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

Corona said he was made to go through a very rigorous background check by the JBC.

CORONA

MARTINEZ

Judging on suspicion

He also disclosed that in the "consensus voting" of the Supreme Court on March 25, most of the justices voted for him.

"What more can he (Pimentel) ask of me? Is he still questioning my fitness to sit in the court? " asked Corona.

A minute later he rang the INQUIRER to qualify his statement.

"I would like to assure him as well as the political opposition that I would be very fair and impartial in any and all issues. I hope they won't judge me on mere suspicion," he said.

There were early hints that Corona had the appointment in the bag.

Tiglao said earlier that Ms Macapagal was inclined to uphold the recommendation of the JBC.

He extolled Corona's qualifications, downplayed Pimentel's misgivings and dismissed the opposition filed against Corona at the JBC by a cousin of his wife.

"If it's the same complaint as the last time, Secretary Corona has explained it to the JBC, so the JBC thought it's just a nuisance complaint. If you remember, it didn't get very far," he said.

Corona and his wife, Cristina Basa Corona, are involved in a corporate ownership dispute with Cristina's family. A cousin, Ana Basa, wrote to the JBC to register her opposition to Corona's appointment, alleging that Corona had used his government position to forcibly take over the family business.

'Most qualified'

Tiglao said it was hard to argue with the findings of the JBC, which is composed of lawmakers, a Cabinet official, retired Supreme Court and Court of Appeals justices and various academics.

"I guess Rene Corona was thought to be most qualified because of his corporate law background and I would think all of us would want to have a new breed (of justices) in the Supreme Court," he said.

Corona was also in the JBC's shortlist of candidates last year but lost to Antonio Carpio who was eventually appointed as SC associate justice.

Aside from Corona and Martinez, the other recommendees for the two SC vacancies were CA Justices Ruben Reyes and Cancio Garcia; private lawyers Loreto Ata, Ruben Balane, Rogelio Vinluan and former Sandiganbayan Justice Harriet Demetriou.

Corona is a Harvard-trained lawyer and MBA who was active in the movement to bring down the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos after the 1983 assassination of opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

A great admirer of Aquino, Corona met the martyred leader while attending the Harvard Law School in the 1980s.

Lawyer suspended for unethical conduct

THE SUPREME Court suspended a lawyer yesterday for violating the Code of Professional Responsibility and fined another court employee for "simple neglect of duty."

The high court found lawyer Maximo Rodriguez liable for violating Rule 15 of the Code of Professional Responsibility, which prohibits lawyers from representing conflicting interests without the consent of the concerned parties.

Rodriguez was prohibited from practicing law for six months.

Rodriguez was initially representing the complainants in an administrative case involving a piece of land but later transferred his allegiance and services to the other party.

He was also accused of selling a portion of the land in question.

The SC agreed with the recommendation made by IBP commissioner Lydia Navarro who found Rodriguez liable for violating the Code of Professional Responsibility.

However, Navarro did not find sufficient evidence to prove that Rodriguez sold a portion of the land.

The SC ruled that "attorneys owe undivided allegiance to their clients, and should at all times weigh their actions, especially in their dealings with the latter and the public at large. They must conduct themselves beyond reproach at all times."

The court added that it "will not tolerate any departure from the 'straight and narrow' demanded by the ethics of the legal profession."

In another case, Franklin Lluch, process server of the Regional Trial Court Branch 4, Iligan City, was fined P2,000 for simple neglect of duty.

The high court defined simple neglect of duty as "the failure of an employee to give proper attention to a task expected of him, signifying disregard of a duty resulting from carelessness or indifference."

The punishment is suspension from one month and a day to six months, if committed for the first time.

Lluch failed to serve a pre-trial notice on March 9, causing the cancellation of a case hearing.

He did not deny the allegation but explained that he mistakenly placed the notice in the envelope of pre-trial notices for the following week.

"The conduct required of court personnel, from the presiding judge to the lowliest clerk, must always be beyond reproach and circumscribed with a heavy burden of responsibility," the high court said. ***Ma. Criselda Yambot***

Sculpture raffle

THE CONCERNED Artists of the Philippines and the Friends of CAP will hold on April 13 a raffle of 70 sculptures from its "Komitment Koleksyon," a special collection of 100 artworks by the Tondo-based Daambakal Sculptors Collective.

The first batch of 30 Komitment sculptures was launched last January, with the CAP exchanging one sculpture for every P5,000 donation.

For the final batch of 70, the CAP will exchange every P5,000 donation with a ticket that will qualify for the Saturday raffle scheduled to start at 4 p.m. at the Maryhill School of Theology, 13th Street near Gilmore corner E. Rodriguez, Quezon City.

Each ticket holder is assured of a Komitment piece. Five pieces in the collection, worth at least P30,000 each, are works by Daambakal head Rey Paz Contreras.

For inquiries, call the CAP at 421-1880; Contreras Sculptures, 634-1283; or Popular Bookstore, 372-2162.

Solon calls for Con-con

By Juliet L. Javellana

A MEMBER of the House yesterday urged his colleagues to push for a constitutional convention as the way to amend the 1987 Charter, in order to make the move more palatable to the people.

Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri, chair of the House committee on legislative franchises, said 95 percent of the congressmen are for charter change, as well as an overwhelming number of the citizenry.

But a constituent assembly to amend the charter, he warned, could derail the move.

"A constituent assembly could backfire on us (congressmen) because the public would suspect that we would benefit from the changes," Zubiri said.

He said he would make the call for a Con-con during the majority caucus when Congress resumes sessions on Monday.

He said he would make the same recommendation during the national summit of political parties called by Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. for the first week of May.

"So in order to quell public criticism, let us give a constitutional convention the responsibility to make both political and economic amendments," Zubiri said.

He said the cost would be "worth it" since a Con-con would be the most democratic way of amending the Charter.

On the other hand, Valenzuela Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo II said most of the congressmen will push for a constituent assembly.

"The cheapest mode is a constituent assembly and there are enough safeguards to prevent Congress members from benefiting from the constitutional amendments," Gunigundo said.

He said support for charter change is snowballing at this time because the sitting President does not need the changes to extend her term.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is eligible to run in the 2004 presidential elections since she is currently serving the unfinished term of the ousted Joseph Estrada.

"This is the best time to do it," Gunigundo said.

But House Assistant Minority Leader Abraham Mitra proposed that the Cabinet be revamped instead of the Constitution.

"In the short term, a change in the Cabinet may do more good for the government than a Cha-cha," Mitra said in a statement.

Mitra said the Cabinet, though laden with talent, represents the power blocs that supported Ms Macapagal during the Edsa II uprising that ousted Estrada.

"(Political) debts are deemed paid by this time. And one year is long enough to know who the gems and the lemons are in the Cabinet. It is time to free the President from these impositions," Mitra said.

"It is high time the President is given the opportunity to appoint her own people, those whom she believes are really qualified for the posts," he added.

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Solon fears chaos with Meralco hike

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE MANILA Electric Co. was yesterday urged not to pursue its petition for a power rate increase in keeping with the pro-consumer provisions of a newly approved House bill approving the extension of its franchise.

Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri, the chair of the committee on legislative franchises, said it was "ill-timed" for Meralco to ask for an increase when the country is reeling from economic hardships and there is a crisis in the Middle East that could affect world crude prices.

"An increase in power rates would create chaos for daily wage earners," Zubiri said in a phone interview.

He said Meralco could very well afford not to increase its rates as it is "in the black, not in the red."

Instead of asking for a rate increase that would only burden its 18 million consumers, Meralco should find ways to lower operational costs, said Majority Leader Manuel Villar.

Ill-advised

"A rate hike is ill-advised at this time when numerous Filipinos are hard put to make expenses meet," Villar said in a statement.

He cited, among other measures to cut down costs, the need to crack down on power pilferage which causes Meralco to lose millions of pesos.

After conducting three public hearings, the House committee on franchises sponsored House Bill 4551, which proposes to grant Meralco a franchise to supply electricity to certain areas.

The bill, filed by House Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II, was approved at the committee level on Feb. 13, and by the plenary on March 6.

It was approved on second reading by an affirmative *viva voce* vote of 161 to 2 on its third and final reading, with House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla and Rep. Rolex Suplico voting against approval.

Zubiri defended the speedy approval of the franchise bill, saying that the power to grant Meralco's petition for a rate increase did not lie with Congress but with the Energy Regulatory Commission that was created by the Electricity Industry Reform Act.

Hostage

"It is impractical to hostage the franchise because there is no alternative (power supplier). If we remove the franchise and give it to the government, it will send chills (down the spine of) the business community," Zubiri said.

But he said the House had placed new "pro-consumer provisions" in the Meralco franchise bill precisely to protect the consumers from unbridled rate increases.

"We put provisions in the new franchise that the rate increase should be justifiable and if there is an economic crisis, they are especially mandated to be responsive to the needs of the consumers," Zubiri said.

Zubiri said his position was that the pro-consumer provisions should apply to the present, hence his request for Meralco not to seek a rate hike at this time.

Imee de los Santos, the secretary of the House legislative franchises committee, said the pro-consumer provisions were incorporated into the franchise bill after the committee heard the observations and inputs of various sectors.

"The standard franchise bill is not as tedious as this one," De los Santos said.

ZUBIRI

She said three new sections in the Meralco franchise bill contained provisions for the protection of consumers. These are:

In Section 4, pertaining to "responsibility to the public," provides that the Meralco "shall supply electricity to its captive market in the least cost manner… The grantee shall charge reasonable, just and competitive power rates for its services to all types of consumers within its franchise area in order that businesses and industries shall be able to compete."

Under this section, Meralco is also enjoined "not to engage in activity that will constitute an abuse of market power such as but not limited to unfair trade practices, monopolistic schemes and any other activities that will hinder competitiveness of businesses and industries."

It also requires the ERC to modify, improve or change the facilities, poles, lines, systems and equipment of Meralco "for the purpose of providing efficient and reliable service and reduced electricity costs."

Complaint desk

Section 5, pertaining to the rates for services, provides that retail rates and charges for the distribution of electric power end-users are to be regulated by and subject to the approval of the ERC.

Under Section 6, on the promotion of consumer interests, Meralco is required to set up a consumer desk to handle complaints and ensure the adequate promotion of consumer interests. It should also act with dispatch on such complaints.

De los Santos said the committee conducted exhaustive and transparent hearings on Jan. 30, Feb. 6 and Feb. 13. She said consumers groups were invited to the hearings and local government officials were also notified and sent copies of the bill.

Senga is new AFP spokesman

By Martin P. Marfil

BRIG. Gen. Generoso Senga is the next Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson.

Senga takes over from Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan, AFP chief of staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva announced yesterday.

Adan will be moving to Baguio City to head the Philippine Military Academy vice Maj. Gen. Rufo de Veyra who is retiring today.

Adan's appointment will leave the post of Civil Relations Service chief vacant, a position he held in concurrent capacity.

"Senga will be AFP spokesperson until my retirement and it's up to my successor to appoint his choice," Villanueva said. Villanueva is set to retire on May 20.

"As for the CRS, I submitted three names to the President, which I cannot disclose at this time. Let's just wait for the formal announcement," he said.

Senga was AFP spokesperson before he swapped posts with Adan, who was Army chief of staff, last year.

After several months as Army chief of staff, Senga was promoted to deputy chief of staff for civil military operations, or J-7.

Villanueva's coming retirement has been marred by controversy after ex-Army chief Lt. Gen. Jaime de los Santos, himself recently retired, publicly came out against the extension of generals' terms.

De los Santos was reacting to the purported plan of President Macapagal-Arroyo to extend the term of retiring Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu to allow him to be named chief of staff.

DOJ favors PNB rehab

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE JUSTICE department has issued a legal opinion favoring greater participation by the government in the operations of the Philippine National Bank.

In a one-page opinion, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez upheld the legality of the proposed PNB rehabilitation plan that is expected to increase government shares in the bank from the present 16 percent to 45 percent.

"We have reviewed the contract documents and found the same to be consistent with law," Perez said.

However, Perez clarified the legal opinion did not delve into the financial aspects of the rehabilitation plan.

He said the financial intricacies would be "best addressed by the financial and economic managers of the country."

The legal opinion was forwarded to Finance Undersecretary Cornelio Gison and Norberto C. Nazareno, president and chief executive officer of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC).

It did not comment on the specifics of the rehabilitation plan, but Perez told reporters the DOJ had recommended "certain changes to be made so that the same would conform with the law."

"We asked that there be greater participation of the government in the PNB," he said. "So (Tuesday) evening, I signed the legal opinion to the effect that the contract between the PDIC and the PNB be amended in conformity with the law."

Perez, however, did not disclose the contents of the amended deal. "It is outlined," he said.

In issuing the opinion, Perez reversed a Jan. 3 DOJ opinion that limited the ways by which the PNB could undertake "reverse privatization."

In the new opinion, Perez gave finance and PNB officials the green light to implement the proposed rehabilitation plan.

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Knee problem could cripple Erap, says doc

By Volt Contreras

DEPOSED President Joseph Estrada could be a cripple in three years if he does not have immediate knee surgery, a government doctor testified at yesterday's hearing looking into Estrada's petition to have the operation done in the United States.

Dr. Liberato Casison, head of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center's Department of Medicine, said he had recommended knee surgery for Estrada following two X-ray exams taken in May 2001 and last January.

Casison said the X-rays showed that Estrada, who turns 65 next week, had developed "spurs" on the right knee and his tibia had "thickened because of the friction caused by the loss of cartilage."

"The disease would cripple Erap," Casison told the Sandiganbayan. "In three years he would be disabled," he added, according to an Agence France Presse report.

But when pressed by one justice, Casison admitted he had not yet made a "written" recommendation regarding Estrada's condition, but an "informal" one that he relayed to Estrada through his personal physician, Larry Hocson.

He said it was not within his "realm of competence" to suggest where the surgery should be performed.

State prosecutors have opposed Estrada's leaving the country, charging that he was merely using the travel bid as a ruse to flee to US exile and that there were adequate medical facilities in the Philippines for the procedure.

Estrada has been in detention for a year after being indicted for plunder, a crime punishable by death.

State prosecutor Dennis Villa Ignacio argued in court yesterday that the VMMC, a military hospital that has served as Estrada's place of confinement since May, did not report Estrada's knee ailment in its regular medical charts on the detainee prior to February.

"The entry in the medical chart was made only after the defense filed a motion for travel (on Feb. 22)," Ignacio said.

The court will resume hearing Estrada's request to travel abroad for surgery on Friday, at which time the ex-president's attendance will be required since he will be arraigned in his second perjury case.

Also yesterday, Estrada's son, Mayor JV Ejercito of San Juan, announced plans by supporters of his father to hold a street demonstration on the latter's birthday on April 19 to protest his detention and trial.

The demonstrators will link hands in a "human chain" that will stretch from the military hospital to the court building, both of which are in Quezon City.

With an AFP report

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Barangay, youth polls in peril with Comelec chief abroad

WHILE Chair Alfredo Benipayo is traveling aboard, the Commission on Elections is unable to finalize preparations for the scheduled barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections in July.

Because of this, House national defense committee chair Rep. Prospero Pichay has called on Benipayo to return immediately from Europe and act speedily on the election preparations.

In a statement, Pichay warned the Comelec might be unable to perform its constitutional mandate to conduct the scheduled elections in a clean and honest fashion.

Commissioner Resurreccion Borra, the acting Comelec chair, in an interview with dzMM yesterday, admitted the election body could not yet finalize preparations for the special registration of voters for the SK elections scheduled on the April 22-27.

Borra said the Comelec must await the arrival of Benipayo, who in the past two weeks had been traveling with legislators in Europe and the United States on a consultation trip for the proposed Absentee Voting measure.

Last Friday, Commissioner Mehol Sadain said the holding of the special registration for SK voters is crucial so an estimated three million youths aged 15 to 17 could vote. Last year, the Comelec was only able to register two million voters for the SK.

Pichay said the Comelec chair was duty-bound to prioritize preparations for the SK and barangay elections, which Congress set for July. He said Benipayo should have personally attended to the preparations and instead sent a representative to the consultation visit. He noted that Benipayo had already himself attended the first round of consultations with overseas Filipinos some two months ago.

Benipayo is scheduled to arrive on Friday.

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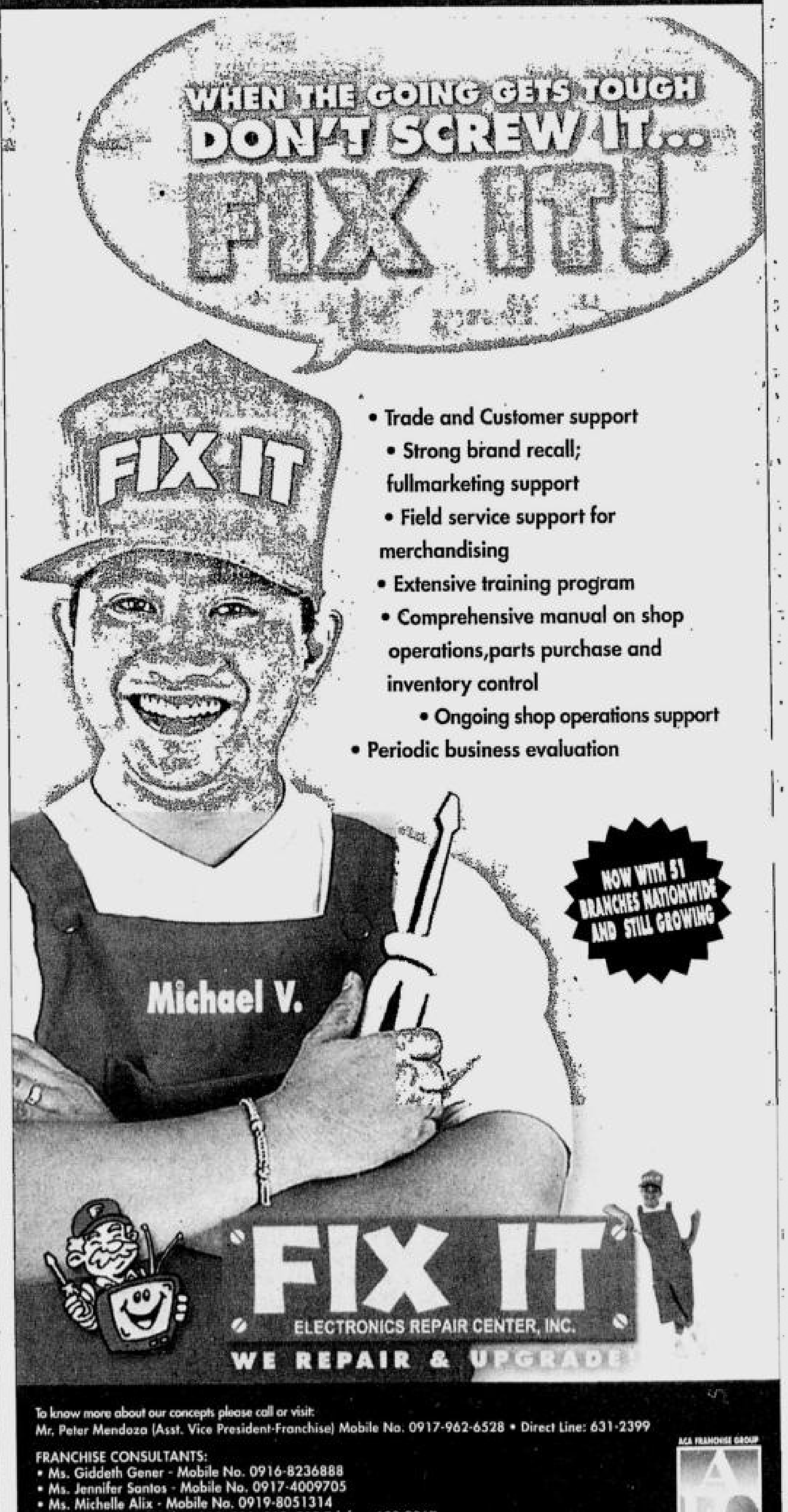
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‘Bejo’ arrested in hospital

By Volt Contreras

TACLOBAN City Mayor Alfredo Romualdez was finally served a warrant of arrest for graft on Tuesday night at a Manila hospital, where he remained confined yesterday because of a heart ailment.

Sandiganbayan sheriffs have since been taking turns guarding the 67-year-old Romualdez at the Manila Doctors Hospital, said chief sheriff Ed Urieta.

“He is now under our custody,” Urieta said, adding that the court has yet to decide when Romualdez should be produced in the courtroom for his long-delayed arraignment.

Romualdez’s attending cardiologist, Rody Sy, furnished the court yesterday with the latest medical bulletin on his patient, Urieta said.

The younger brother of Imelda Romualdez Marcos, widow of ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos, is facing charges for his alleged illegal takeover in 1975 of the Bataan Shipyard and Engineering Co. (Baseco).

The anti-graft court’s 5th Division ordered Romualdez’s arrest a day after he failed to show up for his scheduled arraignment on March 25.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government has sought a travel ban against Romualdez after the mayor disclosed plans to seek heart surgery in the United States a week after the Sandiganbayan issued a warrant for his arrest.

In his report to the court, Urieta said his men found Romualdez at about 9 p.m. on Tuesday after receiving a call from his lawyer, Enrico Fernando.

Quoting Fernando, Urieta said Romualdez “(was) not in hiding but (merely) indisposed.”

Romualdez was “asleep” when the sheriffs arrived at the hospital to serve the warrant, Urieta said.

Urieta said that when he went to see Romuldez later that night, “he was conscious but looked haggard.”

In Tacloban City, Vice Mayor Nofredo Lagonoy said he did not believe that Romualdez’s health condition was serious.

“The circumstances surrounding his announcement (to go on leave) is enough for us to conclude otherwise,” said Lagonoy, who has assumed the post as acting mayor since Romualdez went on leave last Friday. He is expected to return to work after six months.

He left Tacloban City for Manila on Friday to prepare his heart by-pass operation.

Lagonoy suggested that Romualdez be examined by independent medical experts.

The mayor has claimed that he needs to immediately undergo a heart by-pass operation as all four arteries of his heart were clogged up.

His condition was “life-threatening,” his doctors said.

Two top aides Romualdez meanwhile criticized the PCGG’s move to ask for a hold-departure order against the ailing Romualdez.

City legal officer Judge Godofredo Quimsing and city planning development officer Vicente Solis said that by asking for a travel ban against Romualdez, the PCGG was “acting like God” and “making a scapegoat out of the city mayor.”

City officials earlier said Romualdez was planning to have the heart by-pass procedure either in the country or in the United States.

But Romualdez reportedly preferred to undergo the procedure in the country, as he would be closer to relatives and friends during the post-operation phase. ***With a report from Vicente S. Labro and Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visiayas Bureau***

Win streak not surprising, says Bongbong

LAOAG CITY—Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said the Marcoses are not surprised at their “winning streak” in the courts where an increasing number of criminal cases filed against them and their cronies are being dismissed.

“Of course we will put up a fight. Do we want to suffer from defeat? What do they expect?” Marcos said, reacting to the recent court rulings favoring his family.

The governor said they have been winning because of the government’s failure to provide evidence that would make the ill-gotten wealth cases filed against the Marcoses since 1986 merit the attention of the courts.

“They never had the case. They don’t have the documentation. They don’t have the evidence. That’s why they are losing. It is really that simple,” he said.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government recently announced that 92 of the 111 criminal cases it filed against the Marcoses and their cronies in the Ombudsman’s Office have been dismissed.

The PCGG has since vowed to be more earnest at prosecuting other criminal cases that are pending with the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court lest they too end up being dismissed.

But Marcos predicted that his family would continue to win in the courts.

“I know that there are certain elements in the government that cannot believe these results coming in. We’ve been living with these for 16 years. We knew this would happen,” he said.

“That is why we are making (these moves) to settle because we know these (cases) will drag on and (the government) will end up losing,” Marcos added.

In previous interviews, Marcos has said his family wanted to enter into settlement talks with the government regarding the ill-gotten wealth cases as “it is the only solution to the legal impasse that has been going on for the last 16 years.” ***Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Envoy’s no-show in Vatican irks traveling solons

A LEGISLATOR has demanded the recall of the Philippine ambassador to the Vatican for allegedly failing to attend to the needs of a congressional delegation that paid a courtesy call on Pope John Paul II during Easter.

Victoriano Lecaros, spokesperson for the foreign affairs department, said Ambassador to the Holy See Francisco Alba would be made to explain for failing to make an appearance during the visit of the congressional delegation which was headed by Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Ilocos Norte Rep. Roque Ablan has demanded that Alba be recalled, claiming that Alba did not show up at the airport to meet them and again when they had an audience with the Pope.

The House delegation was in Rome upon the invitation of the head of the Italian Chamber of Deputies.

“We will find out what exactly happened, and why the congressmen are complaining. We haven't received their official complaint but we will look into it,” Lecaros said.

Lecaros said that since the visit was official, the ambassador should have been on hand to attend to the accreditation needs of the delegation. ***Christine Herrera***

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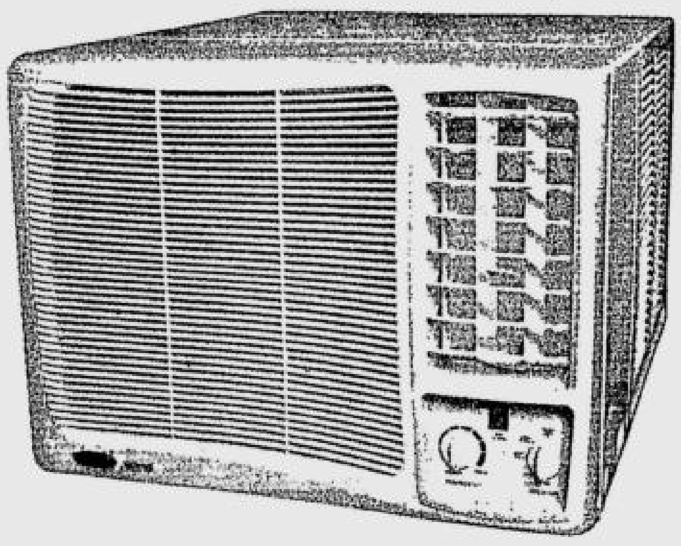

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TREE'S COMPANY

The man they accused of involvement in an alleged plot to destabilize the government stands next to President Macapagal-Arroyo as she plants a tree along the newly opened Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard in Pasay City as part of her birthday celebration. Former Puerto Princesa City Mayor Edward Hagedorn (left), who has denied the allegation, was invited to the tree planting to share his experience in Puerto Princesa, where he founded an environmentalist NGO called Tagbalay which is committed to plant one million trees in two years. Looking on is Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez.

Asian Spirit: No fare hike

ASIAN Spirit, the country's only cooperative-owned airline company, has announced that it would not raise air fare despite the general upward trend in fuel prices.

Archibald Po, director of Asian Spirit, said the company's decision not to increase air fare is a statement of support and a belated birthday gift to President Macapagal-Arroyo, who turned 55 last week.

"The move of Asian Spirit is highly commendable and is a big relief to our travelers. It demonstrates the social conscience of the company particularly during these times of rising fuel prices," said Transportation and Communication Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez.

In a letter to Alvarez, Po expressed support to the numerous reform measures of Alvarez to modernize and streamline the aviation industry.

The Asian Spirit announcement followed those of 15 jeepney, taxi and bus associations that they would not increase their fares despite the announcement by oil companies of another increase in pump prices.

The assurance was given to Alvarez by representatives of the transport organizations, which said that it was their birthday gift to Ms Macapagal.

Asian Spirit was established by pilots, flight stewards and ground crew from their individual savings. It services mainly tertiary and "missionary" routes throughout the country, or those not served by the major airlines.

De Villa pushes Reporma exec for DENR post

By Carlito Pablo

THE REPORMA Party of former Executive Secretary Renato de Villa will push for the appointment of its secretary general, Jose Mari Gerochi, as environment secretary if Heherson Alvarez fails to be confirmed by the Commission on Appointments in its next session.

An administration source said De Villa had communicated to Malacañang his party's wish that Gerochi be appointed to head the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, as Reporma, a member of the People Power Coalition, "does not have adequate representation in this administration."

Incidentally, Alvarez is the secretary general of the Lakas-NUCD, the dominant party in the PPC.

Gerochi once served as acting DENR chief and was an undersecretary in the Department of Agriculture.

The same source said Alvarez, who was bypassed by the CA before the Lenten break, has been given "one last chance to be confirmed during the next session of Congress" by President Macapagal-Arroyo. The CA is comprised of Senate and House members.

Two blocs in the House—one from Southern Tagalog and the other covering the entire Mindanao region—have formally opposed Alvarez's confirmation.

Alvarez also had a run-in with the Liberal Party after he suspended US-trained environment engineer Peter Abaya as director of the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau one day before Abaya was to assume his new post as department assistant secretary last September.

Abaya is a son of Liberal Party stalwart Rep. Plaridel Abaya (Cavite).

Aside from Gerochi, Malacañang is said to be considering other candidates should Alvarez fail to be confirmed.

They are former Bulacan governor Roberto Pagdanganan, former DENR undersecretaries Mario Roño and Roseller de la Peña and former Marikina mayor Bayani Fernando.

Some Basilan families coddling Abu–Villanueva

ARMED Forces chief of staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva yesterday said some members of influential Basilan families are coddling the Abu Sayyaf.

This, he told defense reporters, was one of the problems facing the military.

His remarks came several days after Army troops clashed with relatives of Tuburan Mayor Dorie Kalahal who had a house in Sitio Patikul, Poblacion, Lamitan town, Basilan island.

Government troops had claimed that they were out to arrest Aldam Tilao alias Abu Sabaya, who was supposedly inside the mayor's house with some of his men.

The move against the mayor's house, Villanueva said, was made by soldiers based on information they received from intelligence sources.

VILLANUEVA

He added that he had tasked Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu to evaluate the incident.

Yesterday, he reiterated that the Abu Sayyaf had been receiving support from influential Basilan families.

"There are some individuals from influential families in Basilan who are coddling the Abu Sayyaf Group. It hampers our operation to annihilate the bandit group," he said.

"As for the exact number (of Abu Sayyaf supporters), it is something operational that could jeopardize our mission," he added as he refused to reveal more details about the support for the Abu Sayyaf.

For now, he said the operations against the Abu Sayyaf continue.

"We will get the Abu Sayyaf at all costs and rescue the remaining hostages soon. We hope to recover them safely, we hope that this said chapter will end soon," he added.

The Abu Sayyaf had been holding Americans Martin and Gracia Burnham and Filipino nurse Ediborah Yap hostage for several months.

Southcom chief mum on succession

DAVAO CITY—Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu would rather remain mum on issues raised against him by retired Gen. Jaime de los Santos.

Earlier, De los Santos, former Army chief, said Cimatu's scheduled assumption to the military's top position in May has caused widespread demoralization among officers.

"I would rather not make a comment, but instead concentrate fully on my job as the Southcom commander," Cimatu told reporters here before visiting the headquarters of the 701st Infantry Brigade in Mawab, Compostela Valley, on Tuesday.

He said he was pre-occupied with the growing threats from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the Abu Sayyaf bandits, the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom group and the New People's Army that issues against his reported succession to outgoing AFP chief of staff Diomedio Villanueva have to wait.

But when pressed whether he was ready to accept the appointment, Cimatu said: "As a good soldier I will abide with the instructions of the President."

Villanueva himself said he sees no problem with Cimatu being on top of the military's hierarchy.

Besides, he said the appointment of the chief of staff lies solely on the discretion of the president.

Meanwhile, Cimatu also urged reporters here to interview Brig. Gen. Alfonso Dagudag, whom he described as the next chief of the military's Southern Command.

Dagudag currently heads the 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City. ***Dennis Jay C. Santos with a report from Bing Gonzales, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Hostage priest arrested for libel

A ROMAN Catholic priest was yesterday arrested and charged with libel after he allegedly linked a politician to the notorious Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang, ABS-CBN television said.

The station reported from Basilan that Fr. Cirilo Nacorda was charged for allegedly libeling former Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn.

NACORDA

Nacorda, the parish priest of Lamitan town on Basilan, turned himself in to police yesterday and was released after paying a P10,000 bail bond, it added.

The priest gained national renown in the 1990s after he survived months of captivity at the hands of the Abu Sayyaf.

After his rescue he armed himself with a gun and used the pulpit to campaign against the Abu Sayyaf.

Last year he and a group of Lamitan residents testified before a Senate committee to denounce the alleged collusion of certain high-ranking military officials and the Abu Sayyaf.

The hearings ended inconclusively and no charges were brought against the implicated officials.

Hagedorn was the former mayor of the western city of Puerto Princesa. The Abu Sayyaf raided an island resort near the city last May and abducted 20 people, including three American tourists.

One of the Americans was later murdered in captivity. The gunmen still hold three hostages, including a US Christian missionary couple. US military advisers are now helping Filipino troops pursue the kidnappers on Basilan.

Hagedorn said in a television interview that he had filed charges against the priest with a heavy heart.

"I have many friends in the Church, but my family suffered from his libelous remarks," he added. ***AP***

Moro rebel slain in clash

COTABATO CITY—Government forces clashed anew with Moro rebels in Maguindanao on Tuesday, leaving one rebel dead and three others captured, the military reported.

But the Moro Islamic Liberation Front said the soldiers initiated the attack, in violation of the 1997 general agreement on the cessation of hostilities.

Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said elements of the 47th Infantry Battalion were responding to civilian complaints of harassment and holdups in Datu Paglas, Maguindanao, when they were ambushed in Barangay Puya by about 30 heavily armed men at around 5 a.m.

"This triggered the clashes," Ando told the INQUIRER.

He said no casualties were reported on the government side.

Soldiers recovered two M-16 Armalite rifles, a Garand rifle, an M-79 grenade launcher and about 200 rounds of ammunition at the scene of the clash.

But MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said the incident was a deliberate offensive by the military against an identified MILF camp in Datu Paglas.

"We are forwarding our formal complaint to the peace panels," Kabalu said, referring to the groups representing the government and the rebels currently in back-channel peace talks somewhere in the country.

Kabalu said three MILF fighters were captured, but this was not reflected in the military report.

"Three of our fighters are in the custody of the 47th IB," Kabalu said, adding "we do not know what their situation is now."

Ando, quoting reports from the field, said the soldiers were informed of the presence of suspected criminals in Barangay Puya. "We had no information about the presence of MILF fighters in the area," he said.

Formal peace talks between the government and the MILF are set to resume next month or in June, according to Presidential adviser on the peace process Eduardo Ermita. ***Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Nat'l day of mourning for 2 National Artists

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has set two days of mourning for National Artists Levi Celerio and Lucio San Pedro who died last week.

She declared April 10 a national day of mourning for Celerio, and April 11 for San Pedro.

Government offices were told to fly their flags at half staff on those days.

"It is fitting to set aside a day of national mourning to honor a great Filipino who has left an enduring legacy to our people," the President said of Celerio and San Pedro in separate proclamations.

She said their deaths were a "big loss to our music-loving nation."

She signed Proclamations 171 and 172 on Monday.

San Pedro, a renowned composer, conductor and music professor, died on March 31. He was 86.

Celerio died on April 2. He was turning 92.

The two collaborated on the classic "Ugoy ng Duyan;" San Pedro provided the music while Celerio supplied the lyrics.

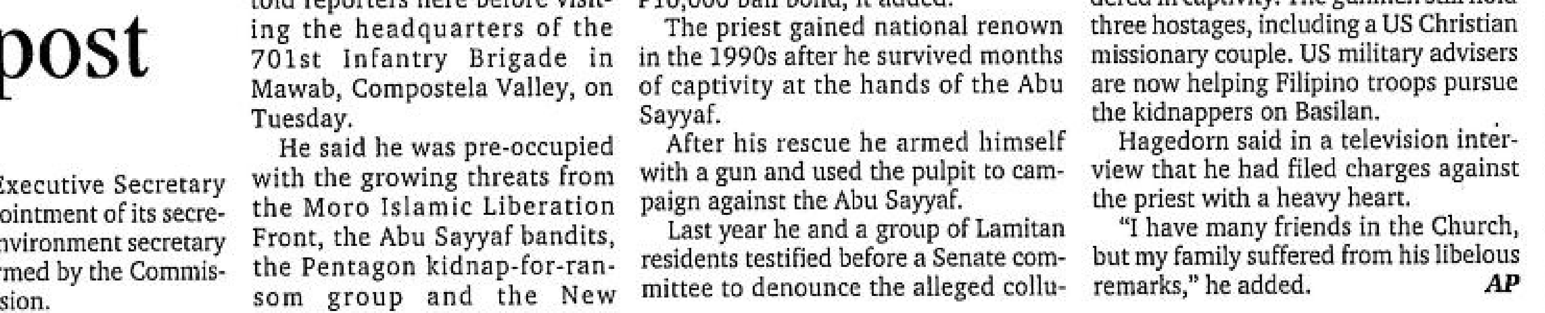
San Pedro was named National Artist for Music in 1991; Celerio was named National Artist in 1997 and given the title, "Poet of Philippine Music."

Celerio is in the Guinness Book of Records for his unique talent of playing music out of leaves.

Ms Macapagal saw San Pedro when she visited his hometown Angono, Rizal, last month.

She visited Celerio's wake last week.

Earlier the President asked the media to play the works of the two National Artists in tribute.



JENNIE ILUSTRE

VETERANS IN D.C.

Philippine Ambassador to the United States Albert del Rosario shakes the hand of World War II veteran Guillermo Rumingan after the wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Arlington Cemetery in Washington D.C. on the 60th anniversary of the Fall of Bataan on Tuesday. Looking on are Purple Heart recipient Patrick Ganio (center) and 90-year-old veteran Gaudencio Dagdag.

FORTUNE'S BEST

ANNUAL SSI 2002 AWARDS

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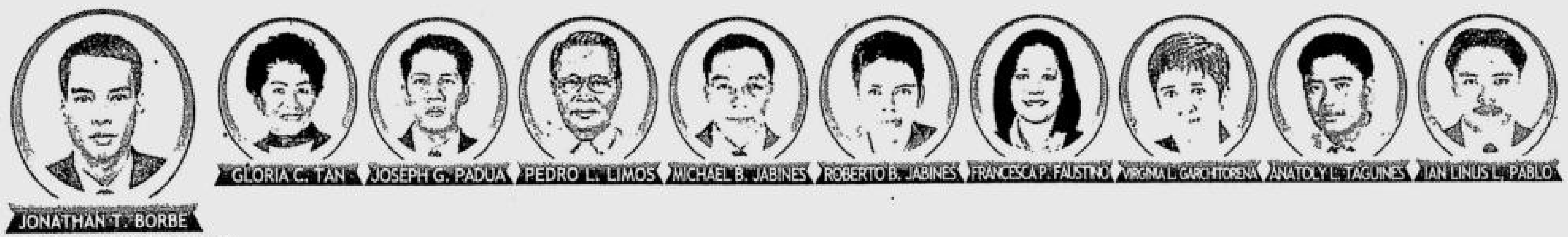

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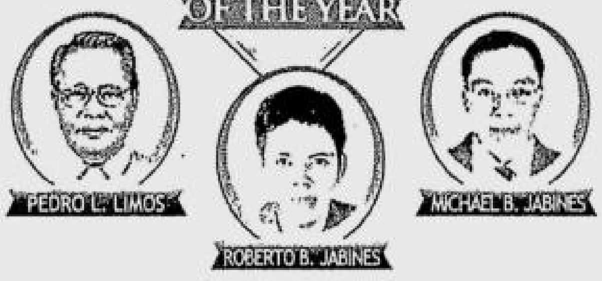

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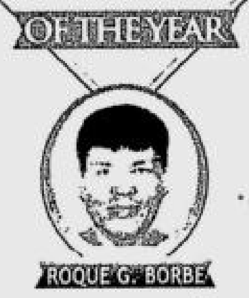

ROQUE G. BORBE

Awarding rites will be held tonight at the Rigodon Ballroom of The Peninsula Manila, at 5:30 p.m. and the pleasure trip to Hongkong and Macau will be on April 12-15, 2002.

fortune life

FORTUNE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, INC.

Fortune Life Building, 162 Legaspi Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City
Tel Nos.: 892-98-41 to 49 (connecting all departments) Fax no.: 812-18-32 E-mail:fortlife@skyinet.net URL:http://www.fortunelife.com

EUGENIA D. APOSTOL
Founding Chairman

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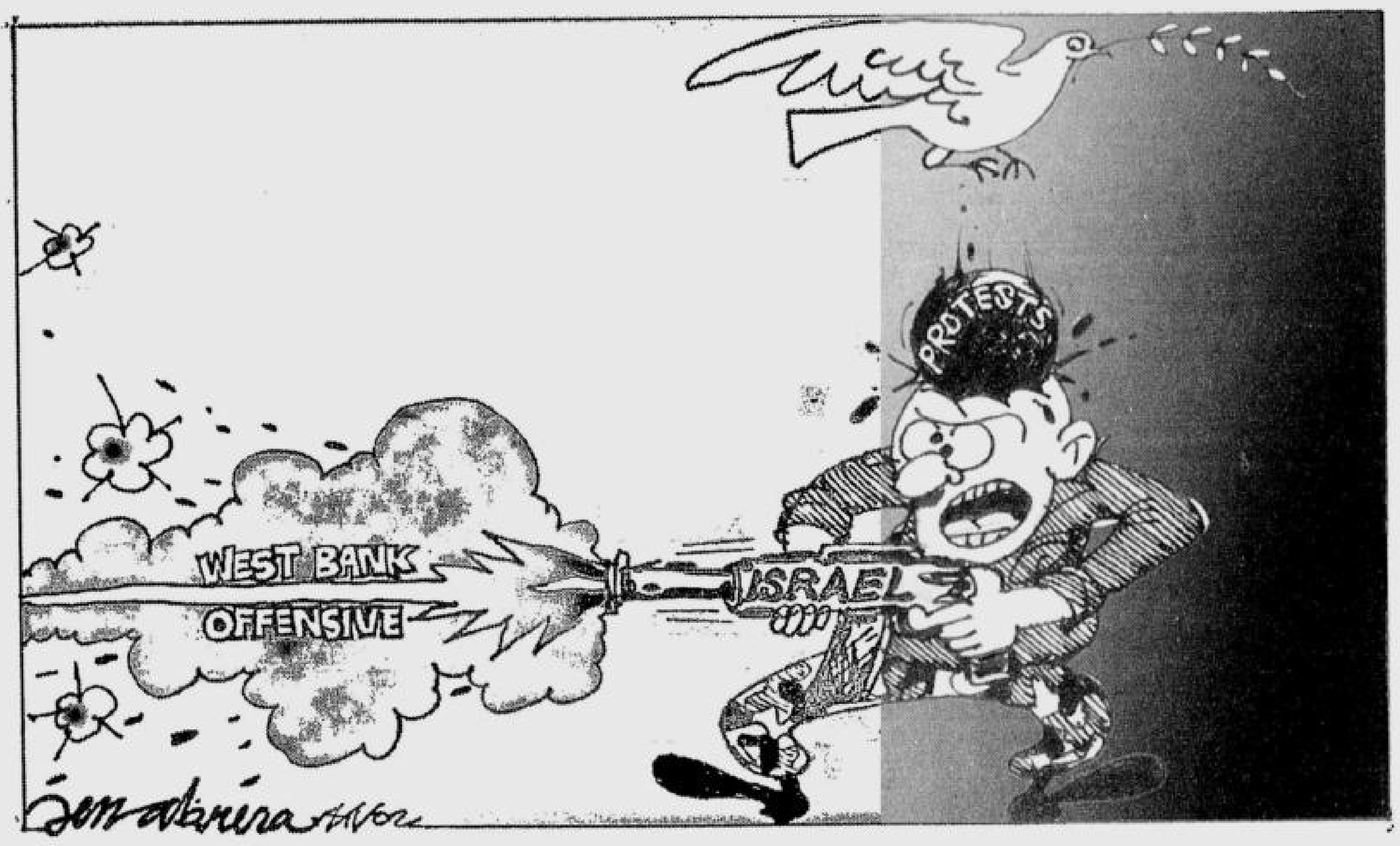

Tricky peace mission

EDITORIAL

US SECRETARY of State Colin Powell's peace mission to the Middle East has already been dogged by skepticism before he could arrive at his crucial destination on Friday, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories on the West Bank.

On the first leg of his mission, in Morocco, a close US ally, King Mohammed VI, pointedly asked him why he was not heading for Jerusalem sooner rather than following the itinerary of having five stops in meetings with moderate Arab and European leaders. When asked by the king, "Don't you think it would be more important to go to Jerusalem first?", Powell said it made sense to lay the foundation for his Jerusalem visit by first coordinating with allied governments, which, by the way, have demanded the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces that have swept the Palestinian cities on the West Bank for the past 10 days.

The perception among the moderate Arab states, many of which are engaged in an earnest effort to revive peace talks on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is that Powell is marking time to give Israel latitude in making a *fait accompli* the mission of its West Bank offensive before he arrives in Israel.

The mission, as defined by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, is to dismantle Yasser Arafat's "terrorist infrastructure" on the West Bank from which Palestinian militants stage suicide bombing raids inside Israel. Once the Israeli forces complete their mission, Sharon said, they would withdraw into "security zones" constituting a buffer between Israeli and Palestinian territories. Experience has shown that such buffer zones are not impenetrable walls that can prevent infiltration into Israeli settlements and attacks on Israeli civilians. The security zones are themselves a revival of a failed scheme proposed for Israeli settlements in occupied territories.

Whether or not Powell is marking time to allow Israel to complete its military "mission," Sharon is heeding completely urgent pleas from President George W. Bush for Israel to withdraw from the West Bank cities. Israel has been sending mixed signals about its intentions.

The Israeli government, in the wake of the Powell mission, announced on Tuesday that Israeli troops had begun to move out of Tulkarm and Qalqilya after "finishing their job" there, but at the same time Israeli forces moved into the West Bank town of Dora. Israeli forces continue to surround Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah. Sharon has told parliament that Israel must dismantle Arafat's "regime of terror," a statement which raises questions over what he intends to do with Arafat. Powell is dissociating the United States from the terrorist label applied by Sharon on Arafat, and to emphasize their difference, Powell is due to meet Arafat at the weekend, implicitly recognizing Arafat as head of the Palestinian Authority.

Although Powell has said he hoped the withdrawal from Qalqilya and Tulkarm signaled the start of a wider pullback, Israel is playing the game of grabbing cities and towns to compensate for withdrawing from cities where its military "mission" has been completed.

Bush's policy shift of engaging the United States in diplomatic peacemaking to restore the severely damaged peace process in the aftermath of the Israeli military sweep of Palestinian cities is handicapped by Sharon's relative autonomy in pursuing a hard-line to counter what he calls Palestinian terrorism. Sharon's military offensive against terrorism has proved to be an embarrassment to Bush's own international war on terrorists, given that Sharon is combating Palestinian militants with state terrorism. Already, the heightening of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has eroded support among moderate Arab states for US options to attack Iraq, which Bush has tagged as another nerve center of terrorists after Afghanistan.

By the time Powell arrives in Israel, the Israeli military offensive could have changed the balance of forces on the ground. He will have to invent new diplomatic tools to respond to problems created by Sharon's insubordination and truculence.

Quezon City Hall afraid of Fairview squatter

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THIS one is for Ripley's Believe It or Not: a structure being utilized as a used car display, car wash shop and snack bar stands right in the middle of a city street, blocking the entire entrance to a subdivision, Neapolitan Sitio Seville, North Fairview, Quezon City. Residents of the subdivision cannot go in or out through this gate at Regalado Avenue and Akasya Street. It has been there for more than a year now, during which time the barangay captain, Flora Gasser, and the whole barangay council have been trying to have it removed.

What is strange is that although the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Quezon City Business Permits and Licensing Office and the Office of the Building Official all have declared that the structure is illegal and have ordered its demolition (it has neither a building permit nor a mayor's permit to operate as a business), City Hall cannot work up the nerve to demolish it. Why?

This is squatting at its worst: an illegal structure stands in the middle of a city street, blocking the entrance and exit of residents to their homes inside the subdivision, and government agencies have ordered its demolition but City Hall does not seem to have the desire, the will or the ability to remove it. What have the owners of the structure got over officials of City Hall that has cowed them?

And here is another strange thing: it was the board of directors of the homeowners' association that gave permission for the two owners to put up their illegal structure there for two years in exchange for a certain amount. The root cause seems to be the intramurals between two groups of residents in Neapolitan Sitio Seville.

It seems that one group refused to pay its monthly dues to the homeowners' association. During an election to the board, they were not allowed to vote because they were delinquent in the payment of dues, so those elected were candidates belonging to the rival group. Once in office, the new board signed a two-year lease contract for the use of one end of Akasya Street corner Regalado Avenue. This is the entrance to the subdivision near which the nonpaying group resides. Residents now have to use another gate far from where this group lives. The board's reason: it needs the rent money "for security purposes." But what a way to get even with your rivals.

On Aug. 31, 2000, 36 residents wrote a letter to then Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. complaining against the illegal structure. They claimed that road lots, open spaces and alley lots inside Fairview Park Subdivision, of which Neapolitan Sitio Seville is a part, have already been donated to the city government by virtue of a deed of donation and acceptance executed on Oct. 18, 1978, between B.C. Regalado & Co., developers, and then Quezon City Mayor Adelina Rodriguez.

On the basis of the complaint, the Office of the Building Official (OBO) issued an order on Dec. 1, 2000 declaring the structure illegal due to the lack of a building permit and that since the structure was built on a public street, it can be summarily demolished even without judicial proceedings. The OBO ordered the owners to demolish the structure.

The owners filed a motion for reconsideration, alleging that contrary to the complainants' claim, all road lots within Neapolitan Sitio Seville are still privately owned by the New North Fairview Realty and Development Corp. Inc. (NNFRDI) and have never been donated by its previous owners, B.C. Regalado & Co. to the Quezon City government. They submitted a certification dated Jan. 20, 2001 of an official of the NNFRDI that all roads within Sitio Seville are still owned by the developers and have not been donated to the Quezon City government, and that it allowed the homeowners association to use the end portion of Akasya Street to raise funds for security purposes.

The OBO denied the motion for reconsideration. The owners appealed to the DPWH.

In its resolution of Jan. 16, 2002 signed by Secretary Simeon Datumanong and lawyers Oscar D. Abundo and Jose L. Valdemoro, the DPWH declared that Akasya Street is a city street, having been already transferred to the city government. "Therefore, it is deemed part of the public domain, beyond the commerce of man, hence, not subject to private appropriation." The homeowners' association cannot lease it and the structure built on it is illegal and should be demolished.

Aside from this, the Quezon City Permits and Licensing Office had declared on Dec. 14, 2001, that the structure has no business permit and it was ordered closed and padlocked. It had been operating throughout the year without a mayor's permit. But before the closure orders could be served, the owners miraculously produced a mayor's permit secured from the Quezon City, Novaliches branch to which Fairview does not belong.

Even so, the BPLO Novaliches branch inspected the questioned car display/car wash/snack bar and concluded that it had violated many BPLO rules and other ordinances and should be closed.

But the structure is still there, seemingly untouchable. Barangay Captain Gasser sought the help of Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte who promised to do something. But it seems even the mayor is powerless against the owners. The structure is still there.

Here is a barangay captain and her council trying very hard to enforce the law and city ordinances within their jurisdiction. But City Hall does not seem inclined and capable of providing legal and moral support to its own law-abiding barangay officials.

Passing of time

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

MY father died shortly after I turned 14. But I recall during the time that we had that he particularly liked one local singer, whose vocal powers he did not tire of pointing out, or listening to. His name was Diomedes Maturan.

It was from him I first heard of Maturan. There was a local version of "Tawag ng Tanghalan" in Naga City, which was "Hagianan sa Kabitoonan," literally "Stairway to the Stars." That was the amateur hour held every Saturday at the town plaza or kiosk, which drew in talents from far and wide. The competition was fierce, and the standards—at least where I stood then, which was barely four feet, and looking at it now through the rose-colored lens of nostalgia—were high. What I could not understand at one time, however, was why one song kept cropping up. Barely a week went by without it being sung by a contestant. That song was "Rose Tattoo."

It was my father who told me that was sung by Diomedes Maturan. Maturan, my father said, had won in the "Tawag ng Tanghalan"—then the closest thing to musical heaven on earth—with it.

It was only much later that I would learn it was in fact sung by Perry Como, and that Maturan had gained fame as "the Perry Como of the Philippines." Following a trend in those more innocent, import-substitution, times (which clearly went beyond economics to culture) to produce a Filipino version of an American icon. There were even fiercer claims to the title of "Elvis Presley of the Philippines," but if I recall right, the strongest one was made by, tadan, Eddie Mesa, father to the famous De Mesa brood. But that's another story. By the time I learned Como had originally sung "Rose Tattoo," I did not particularly care. In my mind, that song would forever belong to Maturan.

Which is not altogether being kind to the man. As I would also learn later, that song has been both Maturan's bane and boon. It gave him fame, but it also gave him chains. It hounded him long after he vigorously pursued a career in singing original Filipino songs, the ones written by, among others, Lucio San Pedro and Levi Celerio. Ironically, he would be at the wake of Celerio, whom he considered his mentor and surrogate father, mourning his loss. Maturan would often be invited to sing at special occasions, and he would croon his Filipino songs, among them his favorite, "Dinggin" whose lyrics were written by Celerio. But inevitably, like the call of duty, or the pall of doom, he would be asked to sing one song. Guess what it was.

Wow, three in a row in just a week. It's enough to make you believe that the lives of people who have deeply touched each other are not just psychically linked, they are physically so as well. And these are not just popular Filipino musical figures, these are pillars of Filipino popular music. Maturan's passing is all the more mournful because he was only 61. San Pedro and Celerio at least had lived to a ripe old age. Who knows where Maturan's explorations might have taken him had he lived for another 20 years.

For all his vigorous excursions into Tagalog music, however, Maturan's passing for me represents the passing of a more innocent era more than anything else. The final stone put on the grave of a simpler, kinder, time. I know that time resides more in the mind than in actual fact: there would have been nothing simple and kind about the late 1950s and early 1960s for those who lived then, particularly to people like Luis Taruc, whose life was featured in our front page the other day along with Maturan's death. And the age, or world, Maturan represented may well have passed long before he did. The age, or world, of piano bars, dark smoke-filled rooms and men with mellifluous voices crooning love songs, or sighing desperate sighs, to real or imagined lovers.

I know there was some sort of revival of piano bars in the early 1980s. There were several in Ermita and Makati, which drew in a gaggle of "Tawag ng Tanghalan" winners. That was where I got an insight also into the meaning of "sentimental value," which is a value that is really very extrinsic, a grave importance we attach to things that of themselves are really inconsequential.

It was in such a bar that a friend of mine, a resolute rocker, first heard the song, "Rose Tattoo," and he went into spasms of uncontrollable laughter. It wasn't the product of alcohol or weed, it was the product of the lyrics of the song. The title of the song alone, when I apprised him of it, he already found mirthful. The first lines, he found even more so: *"She wore the rose tattoo/ To prove her love was true/ I'll go on caring for one who's wearing/ The rose, the rose tattoo."* My friend couldn't understand how a song that carried such breathtakingly silly lines could have once been a monster hit. He forgot "Wooly Bully."

If there's a loss from the passing of Maturan's age, or time, it is in the end personal rather than social. I don't know that the country needs unduly to be oppressed by the loss of the 45 RPM record and the Lo-Waist Gang along with the piano bar and the "Rose Tattoo." Though it most certainly needs to be oppressed by the loss of "Dinggin" and other Filipino popular love songs, which is the flip side of Maturan. But there is a corner in our minds, the one that offers a haven from the cares of the world, the one that is touched only by sun and wind, that is disturbed when the physical symbols that link us to it disappear. Or that is rattled as in the case of Nida Blanca, who was murdered. Maturan's passing causes less violent tremors to that psychic place of refuge, but it sends a ripple of quiet upheaval nonetheless. You feel a shadow pass across its face. You feel a loss of innocence.

That I pause awhile to mourn.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

‘No deal’—Alvarez

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS a people we can't seem to celebrate a good break. Now that Fr. Guiseppe Pierantoni has been released from captivity we have entered into a second stage: debating *ad nauseum* whether he was released by his captors or rescued by the military/police, whether any ransom was paid for him or not, etc. Will it be an endless debate again? But the interesting thing is that even the Bologna-born Pierantoni seems to have become afflicted with the same disease his host country is sick of. After he was rescued/released, he was quoted as saying it was a "miracle" that saved him, but now he has been talking about "negotiations," leading the media to conclude about a payoff. He should just shut up and enjoy his new lease on life.

* * *

During the President's birthday party, Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez related how he was besieged by calls from friends, including those from NGOs and Edsa II forces, who wanted to know if he had agreed to the "win-win" formula Speaker Jose de Venecia supposedly proposed to him and former Environment Management Bureau Chief Peter Abaya, as a peaceful solution to their conflict. It will be recalled that Alvarez had blocked Abaya's appointment as DENR assistant secretary after it was shown that the latter in 2000 allowed the increase in the importation of ozone-destroying chemicals, contrary to the Montreal Protocol to which the Philippines was a signatory, coursing it through eight firms that had no business with these chemicals, such as a bra and panty importer and a real estate firm. Alvarez launched instead an investigation of the DENR official, and should the case warrant it, he plans to file charges against him. In retaliation Abaya filed an official objection to Alvarez's confirmation by the Commission on Appointments, and his father, Cavite Rep. Plaridel Abaya, has lobbied with his Southern Tagalog colleagues not to vote for Alvarez.

* * *

The news report said JDV had proposed a *quid pro quo*: that Alvarez withdraw his opposition to Abaya's appointment at the DENR in exchange for Abaya's withdrawal of his opposition to Alvarez's Commission on Appointments confirmation. I queried Alvarez about this and he stressed that he could not in conscience agree to this *quid pro quo*. "How can I do this, when I am having several other DENR personnel also investigated for wrongdoings, including two ranking officials," he said. "If I were to agree to this trade-off, this would mean that there is *palakasan* again in the DENR." JDV doubtless wants to help his fellow Lakas official get the commission nod, and is also under pressure from some House colleagues who are trying to accommodate Representative Abaya. But in fairness to Alvarez, I heard him tell JDV earlier at JDV's residence: no deal on Abaya.

The DENR chief has displayed a principled stand on this issue, and I can only hope the members of the commission will not put the personal interest of a colleague (Plaridel Abaya) above the national interest, and that they will vote for his confirmation. More than any other post, it's the DENR that needs someone with stature who is not afraid to say no to the politicians, as some of them oftentimes are in cahoots with the environmental predators. Alvarez should not be punished for his principles.

* * *

Two diplomats on both sides of the Pacific are relieved over the happy ending to the unfortunate episode wherein Vice President and Foreign Secretary Tito Guingona was thrown out of an official dinner in Monterey, Mexico, by some low-level protocol officer last month. The Mexican government has issued a formal and official apology to the RP government. At the Palace reception, the amiable Mexican ambassador, lawyer and immigration expert Enrique Hubbard, recalled how sad he was that the lamentable discourtesy should happen to "such a nice fellow" as his "dear friend" Guingona; but he also said it's a measure of how strong the centuries-old relationship between the two countries is that so many friends here commiserated with him. As one Filipino put it, "despite what happened, we Filipinos love Mexico with a "savage love," recalled Hubbard with a laugh. One Filipino official who sounded still quite miffed over the Guingona episode, however, is House foreign relations chair Apolinario Lozada Jr. "*Galit pa ako sa nangyari*," he told me at the Palace function.

* * *

On the other hand, our chargé d'affaires in the RP Embassy in Mexico City, lawyer Eduardo de Vega, is also glad that with the end of the Guingona episode, the way was paved for the arrival of new Philippine Ambassador Justo Orros (recall that Orros was ordered by Guingona to stay put in Los Angeles until the formal apology came). De Vega, however, took exception to reports here that Mexican-RP trade ties are "minimal" and therefore, should there be a need to downgrade our embassy in Mexico City, it should not affect RP interests that much. He points out that while it is true that 90 percent of total Mexican trade is with its North American partners, the US and Canada, Mexico remains RP's largest trade partner in Latin America; in fact it is our 16th largest export market overall and we enjoy a large trade surplus with it. De Vega stressed that last year Mexico imported more RP products than did Spain, Italy, Belgium, Israel and Indonesia.

De Vega also reports that Pope John Paul II is scheduled to arrive in Mexico this July for the canonization of Juan Diego, the Aztec to whom the Virgin Mary, now known as Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of all the Americas, appeared 500 years ago. By the way, Fr. Catalino Arevalo, a big Marian devotee, recently told me that the rare time that the Pope has authorized a canonization outside Rome, it was to honor several candidates to sainthood. But in Juan Diego's case, this is the first time he will canonize only one person—a way to show the importance the Church is attaching to Latin America.

How to cover a funeral

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHEN it comes to pomp and spectacle, ritual and ceremony, nobody can beat royalty and organized religion. And when the two combine, as they did the other day with the funeral of the Queen Mother Elizabeth of the United Kingdom, the "show" is both spectacular and meaningful, moving and dazzling.

But the power of the ceremonial tribute to Britain's beloved "Queen Mum" lay not in how elaborate it was, or how ornate the décor, or maudlin the music, or effusive the praise, but in its utter simplicity, dignity and quiet. Yes, quiet. A large part of the ceremonies was conducted in silence, broken only by the wailing of bagpipes and the rattle of drums, the sublime angelic voices of the choir and the brief but meaningful readings, from the "Queen Mum's" favorite psalm to the fond and heartfelt homily of Dr. George Carey, archbishop of Canterbury, who chose to focus on the "Queen Mum's" gifts of "strength, dignity and laughter."

* * *

PERHAPS the coverage by the BBC, which I chose instead of a simultaneous coverage by CNN, helped establish the mood of solemnity and restraint. This is how coverage of a huge state event, that is as well a deeply personal and private moment for a family, should be conducted.

While watching the BBC coverage, I couldn't help but compare it with the coverage of the funeral of Rico Yan, as well as of the events beginning with the finding of his body at Dos Palmas. The coverage of Yan's funeral by ABS-CBN began quietly enough, with the funeral Mass aired live with little commentary. But as soon as the funeral cortege left the grounds of La Salle Greenhills, all hell broke loose, with slightly hysterical reporters shouting into their mikes about the traffic situation while a traffic chopper scouted the route ahead, as if traffic jams along the funeral route were a matter of state security. Reporters were stationed in strategic spots along the way from Greenhills to Manila Memorial Park, and for lack of anything substantial to report, were reduced to commenting on the "significance" of a gasoline station on Yan's life, and ferreting out mourners like the elderly cigarette vendor who was the recipient of Yan's impulsive charity.

Contrast this with the BBC's coverage, which had all the reason in the world to treat the event as a matter of historical significance since the "Queen Mum" indeed embodied Britain's history through much of the 20th century. What we were treated to instead was restrained and yet very informative commentary, from the identity of the various royals and dignitaries arriving at Westminster Abbey, the history of the rituals observed, even the significance of various places and practices to the Royal Family's life.

One lesson our broadcasters would do well to remember: The more significant and emotional the event, the more restrained should be the coverage. Let the sights and sounds speak for themselves. Don't let your face and voice intrude into your viewers' communion with the person to whom they are bidding farewell.

* * *

SPEAKING of funerals, as this is being written, the necrological services for Levi Celerio have just concluded, while a similar service for Lucio San Pedro will be held this morning, both at the Main Theater of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

The two National Artists had the misfortune of passing away around the same time as Yan, so that their quiet passing and the sparse attendance at their wakes and funerals could not but be compared to the avalanche of grief and the virtual flood of tears that followed in the wake of the young actor's sudden death. In all probability, the number of mourners gathering for Mang Levi and Maestro Lucio would have been the same even if Yan had not been so rude as to intrude into their passing. National Artists and "serious" composers and lyricists like them would not have the same kind of mass following nor enjoyed mass adulation as a movie actor and TV personality. That's how the cookie crumbles, and "serious" artists have long reconciled themselves to the lack of recognition and material reward that comes with choosing a higher calling.

* * *

STILL, the negative comments about the disproportionate public mourning for Yan and the two grand old men of Philippine music had a salutary effect in that TV executives had a sudden attack of conscience and chose, in the post-Rico Yan funeral days, to pay tribute to Mang Levi and Maestro Lucio. This, even if it meant risking disastrous ratings and turning off *bagets* viewers.

"Talk TV" and "Sis," both morning talk shows aimed at a largely housewife audience, mercifully took turns honoring the two men. Both also uncannily and wisely chose to focus on the men's music, inviting contemporary singers to give voice and life to the work of Celerio, including his collaboration with San Pedro, the haunting "Sa Ugoy ng Duyan."

Truly, it is the music that will outlive both men. And it is their music that will prevail over the antics of pop stars and the passing trends whipped up and promoted by record labels. It's cold comfort, of course, for Mang Levi and Maestro Lucio who labored in obscurity for much of their life, and for their families who have little besides their musical genes and claim to musical fame to show for their patriarchs' art. But I bet that if you were to ask the two to choose between fame and riches in their lifetime or immortality long after death, they would surely choose the only reward that ever comes to an artist who remains true to his art.

Lucio San Pedro's ‘Sa Dalampasigan’

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

I WAS so stunned by the grandeur and beauty of it—the orchestral music, the soaring voice, the lyrics—that my eyes moistened. It was like a grand sacred anthem. And I imagined Lucio San Pedro, about 70 at that time, wielding the baton, holding it like a magic wand as if signaling the heavens to pour down the music, please, now, on the beloved motherland, *lupang mahal ng araw*. The music was almost visual, more beautiful than a thousand sun-kissed islands on tourism posters.

God, I prayed, let there be traffic so I could listen to the car radio till the music's end. My prayer was answered. And I could not help thinking, where do they hide Filipino music like this, why aren't they played more often, why aren't they on CD? Thank God for dzFE (98.7 FM).

One of the times I was driving when wished I would get stalled in traffic and not arrive at my destination right away was last Saturday evening. I was on my way to a special family gathering somewhere in UP when I tuned in to dzFE, the only station that plays purely fine and classical music. The evening program, "Bravo, Filipino," was featuring music composed by Lucio San Pedro and those whose lyrics were written by Levi Celerio. The station was paying tribute to the two National Artists who died last week within days of each other.

San Pedro will be buried today, in his hometown of Angono, where the remains of National Artist Botong Francisco are buried. This was San Pedro's humble wish. Celerio was buried at the Libingan ng Mga Bayani where National Artists are laid to rest.

One of the great pieces that was played on dzFE that evening I was on the road was San Pedro's "Lupang Mahal ng Araw" (Land Beloved of the Sun), a 30-minute symphonic composition for orchestra and voice. (Should I call it a concerto for voice then? It had something like several movements and songs in it.)

The late soprano Lilia Reyes and the Cultural Center of the Philippines Orchestra performed, with no less than the composer himself conducting. It was a live recording of an Oct. 28, 1980 performance, the program host said, and technology was not so good then, so expect some glitches. See, I memorized almost everything that was said even while driving. Who wrote the lyrics, I didn't catch.

Well, something like that also happened to me some years ago when I heard for the first time, also on dzFE, San Pedro's "Sa Dalampasigan," (On the Seashore) a composition for orchestra, chorus and solo. I lost no time and e-mailed dzFE, pleading to have a copy. Oh yes, the station sent me a cassette tape with "Sa Dalampasigan" plus several San Pedro piano compositions. Alas, it did not say who the performers were and who wrote the lyrics. But thanks!

"Sa Dalampasigan" swept me away. I kept playing this opus these past few days after San Pedro died, listening to it with closed eyes, trying to catch the sound of waves crashing, caressing. I did catch some of the words from the chorus. "*Ang munting alon...Buhat sa malayo... sumasayaw-sayaw, tumatakbotakbo...*" And this one from the baritone/bass: "*Nais kong matunaw, at muling iluwal ng langit, upang di ko madama yaring pagtitiis.*" Wow. Oh, and a lot of *pagsusumpaan* and *buhangin*. Imagine the music.

It is all very onomatopoeic, in both the sound of its music and lyrics. There is a part that reminds me of that climax in the wedding union in Puccini's "Madame Butterfly" I think. The music peaks then one hears the cymbals go bang and the trumpets soar and the sky breaking open. And then the music recedes in peace and surrender, like waves going home to the sea. It is a mystical moment. Like tasting the grandeur of God.

There is something about San Pedro's music that tells you it is distinctly Filipino, like the *kundimans* of Nicanor Abelardo and the hymns of Fr. Eduardo Hontiveros, S.J. The sigh, the laughter, the longing, the ecstasy—they are Filipino. But for the beauty of its melody, yes melody alone, San Pedro's "Sa Ugoy ng Duyan" can stand proudly beside Mendelssohn's immortal "On Wings of Song." I heard "Sa Ugoy ng Duyan" on dzFE that Saturday evening I was on the road, being played by the UP Guitar Ensemble and it sounded universal in its beauty and simplicity, I tried imagining it being played on the Russian balalaika.

If Abelardo's undying "Mutya ng Pasig" has been made the theme song for the resurrection of the Pasig River, San Pedro's "Sa Dalampasigan" should be the anthem of the movement to save our endangered coastal areas and corral reefs.

There is something about rivers and sea shores. Is it the water, the movement, the shape, the surge of life? They evoke something in dormant souls. And their spirit, when set to music by an Abelardo or a San Pedro, stuns you even while you're behind the wheel.

I've had my moments with ocean and shore. Like when the water starts off as a slow symphonic movement then takes a sudden turn and climaxes with a roll of drums and an explosion of cymbals. The sea quakes to a crescendo, then hurls itself against the rocks. Here before you is a concerto at its tempestuous peak. Water breaking into a million crystalline pieces. It is pure music. Salt melts in your eyes. Suddenly you are no longer afraid.

Find that hallowed place where sea and land wed in one turbulent embrace, and that place farther out where, sometimes, there is only the silence of the cathedral waves folding and unfolding.

I found it in "Sa Dalampasigan" where San Pedro gave us a foretaste of the eternal shores.

My childhood years

YOUNGBLOOD

Stella Rossa

*We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.***

TALKING to my father one evening about my childhood years opened the floodgates of memories of my early years. Memories that I have taken for granted or all but forgotten. Some are vague, some vivid, others I would recall with the aid of old photographs.

I am a child of revolutionary parents. (It's liberating to openly say this.) My life especially during my childhood years, was inevitably intertwined with my parents' activities during the dark days of martial law. Recalling those years makes me quiver at the danger and deprivation. At the same time it makes me proud that I was somehow part of the history that kicked out a tyrant in Malacañang.

My parents were anti-Marcos activists. They joined the underground movement in the mid-'70s when they were still teenagers. They quit their studies, went to the countryside in Pampanga and joined the New People's Army. It was in 1980 that they first met when they worked together in a "propaganda collective." Sharing the same cause and principles, they developed love for each other and were married in a revolutionary rite on Nov. 5, 1983.

More than a year later, on Feb. 27, 1985, I was born in an obscure lying-in clinic in Quezon City. My parents could not take care of me full time because of their commitment to their cause. Taking me to their areas of work—in the guerrilla zones or in the "underground houses" in Central Luzon—would put my life in danger. A month after I was born, they left me to the care of my father's sister, whom I would call "Mama," somewhere in Metro Manila.

My parents' world revolved around me and the revolution. They would visit me every now and then depending on their location and activities. They would bring me provisions and *pasalubong*—milk, fruits, juices, vitamins, soap and toys, mostly given by their well-to-do allies.

My first birthday in 1986 fell two days after Marcos was deposed. During Edsa People Power I, I remember a photograph of a small cake my parents bought me with the greeting: "*Malayang kaarawan*, Stella Rossa."

Nanay and Tatay said that parting with me was always heart-rending. They didn't know if they could come back alive to see me again.

Twice, my parents brought me to "guerrilla zones" in Pampanga and Bataan in order "to make me experience living with the masses." My recollection of those times was of vast rice fields, carabaos (which I called "big dogs") and playing with peasant children. Mother said those were stolen times when they could be parents.

In 1988, my parents brought me with them to a "conference" somewhere in Northern Luzon. I remember riding a boat in a park and being atop a horse in some camp. I remember the fog that I thought was snow. I was wrapped in sweaters and mittens for it was very cold. There was a picture of us kids—"children of the revolution"—in front of a fireplace looking like the stereotype "terrorists" in our bonnets.

A few months later, some leaders of this conference were arrested and detained. Others were summarily executed. Fortunately, my parents escaped arrest. We would not see each other again for a longer time. During Christmas that year, there was still no Nanay and Tatay.

My parents had to be resourceful to provide for my needs. They lived through the support of their sympathizers, friends and family. They had a monthly "allowance" of P400, barely enough for their personal needs. Part of this they still saved for me. To earn extra money, Nanay sold T-shirts, towels, firecrackers and every sellable thing that she could think of. She also sold insurance and from her commission she was able to buy me an educational plan. My education was always my parents' priority concern.

I would sometimes pity myself thinking that almost all my clothes and shoes were hand-me-downs. But my parents would buy me a new dress on special occasions like Christmas and birthdays.

One time, they bought me a Barbie doll. I was very happy. Then I noticed other toys or prettier Barbie dolls. Next time we went to the malls (yes, rebels also go to the malls!) I looked hard and long at these beautiful toys behind the glass but would reassure my parents that I would only take a look. "*Tingin lang*, Nanay, *ha*," I would say.

Still, I envied my friends because they could buy the latest Barbie doll or huge stuffed toy. I resented being deprived of such happiness and would sometimes sulk. But as I grew older, I began to understand. My parents would patiently explain that while I have only one Barbie doll, others had none at all, that others even had no food to eat. "Sometimes, we complain that we have no shoes when we should be thankful because others have no feet," was my father's favorite line.

But my parents would liberally buy me books, especially the bargains, whenever possible. When we were together, they also made it a point to read to me. They impressed on me the importance of books, of studying well. When I was older, my father would show me his articles in various revolutionary papers. That I grew up to become a voracious reader and interested in intellectual pursuits may be partly due to such an environment.

During my early school years, my parents would sometimes stay with me in my Mama's home for a longer period because their work permitted them to. Tatay's work permitted him to spend time in the city and Nanay transferred work so that she could be near me. They juggled their underground and aboveground activities, the latter mainly to earn money to support my growing needs.

I did well in academics especially in Math and writing. I was a third grader when my father discovered with great excitement that I had written a "masterpiece," a play of eight lines titled "The Dog and the Tree." It was later published in our school paper. (Reading the piece now makes me squirm in shame but, hey, what do you expect from an 8-year-old?) I also became a champion in one national Math competition. My parents were very proud of me.

But the long years of working underground had taken its toll on my parents' well-being. My father's health was slipping. They had low morale brought partly by their comrades' bickering over a lot of things. In 1994, after 17 years of being on the run, my parents decided to come in from the cold and breathe the fresh air of a "normal" life. In the same year, my younger sister, Nadezhda, was born. Our family finally settled in a Visayan province, my father's home place.

It is said that we can only comprehend the present by going back to the past. I may not fully comprehend my early years—how it affected me and how it shaped my values and philosophy. But I am learning to appreciate and understand many things about me as I travel back to those years of peril and uncertainty.

I have become aware of my parents' deep love for the poor and the oppressed, of their sense of justice and fairness—principles that they still keep in their hearts, principles that I also want to possess.

I still have more questions about the past—mine and especially my parents'. Looking at a black and white photograph of my parents in a farmer's hut bearing arms, my mind wonders. What pushes even gentle people to take up arms and to rebel? I would like to know.

Stella Rossa, 16, is a freshman at the Ateneo de Manila University.

Maynilad ready to face probe on rate hike

PLEASE allow us to respond to the article titled, "Water firms also under fire over plans to increase rates" by Christine Avendaño (PDI, 4/4/02) on House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla's intention to call for a congressional probe into the new water rates of the Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc.

These increases, the first of which took effect in October last year, the second in January this year and a third forthcoming in July this year, were allowed by the government only after a year of arduous negotiations during which all the legal processes were complied with, including the holding of three public hearings and consultations with homeowners associations and other affected parties. The reason why the increases were spread out was the government's condition that they be done gradually, to help lessen the impact on the consumers.

The bases for these increases were strictly reviewed by the regulatory authorities and were found to be correct and in accord with the concession agreement between Maynilad and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

It is pertinent to point out that these increases were not meant to earn a profit for Maynilad, only for it to recover money that could have been spent on its capital expenditure projects but which were spent on the ballooning costs of the $800-million worth of foreign loans of the MWSS that it assumed upon privatization.

Padilla mentions that "more than 50 percent of what consumers were paying were not related to their water consumption," referring to the Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment (FCDA), Currency Exchange Rate Adjustment (Cera), environmental sewer's charge, meter service charge and Value Added Tax items in the consumers' water bills.

The FCDA was allowed by the government to enable Maynilad to recover the P2.7 billion in foreign exchange losses it incurred because of the drastic depreciation of the peso versus the dollar, from P26.50 in 1997 to as much as P52 in 2001. The Environmental Charge relates to desludging and other environmental cleaning costs. And the VAT is a requirement of the government.

As these items are vital to the maintenance of the water network and facilities essential for the continued provision of safe, potable water to the consumers or a government requirement, in the case of the VAT, how can they be termed as "not related to water consumption"?

We would like to assure the public and Padilla that, under the spirit of transparency to which it adheres to, Maynilad is ready to submit itself to any investigation and respond to any questions regarding the rate increases granted it by the government.

We are enclosing for your reference our letter to Padilla responding to the concerns that he raised.

—RAFAEL M. ALUNAN III, president, Maynilad Water Services Inc., MWSS Compound, Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City

Pedophile priests?

WE have three editorials in one week on priestly pedophile activities overseas. None mentioned priests with AIDS! None mentioned why we seem to be immune to both. That is the question and it is not being answered. So it needs a Senate inquiry in aid of legislation in order for us to protect our children from something that we don't know much about unlike in America and Europe.

It is a statistical improbability that we are so free of the above curses when the rest of the world is doing something to combat what has been proven in courts of law. Let us save our children. Where is Bantay Bata?

—T. A. CRUZ, Tondo I, Manila

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Rectifying a historical fallacy

IT is with a deep sense of shame that Erick San Juan (Letters, 4/4/02) continues to perpetuate the idiocy that the three stars of the Philippine flag represent Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. It is a shame because he was right in pointing out that everyone knows this. Everything he learned from his History classes ought to be unlearned.

The Declaration of Philippine Independence specifically mentions that the three stars signify the three principal Islands of this archipelago—Luzon, Mindanao and Panay where the revolutionary movement started. Panay, for San Juan's information, was where the printing press was during the days of the Philippine Revolution. Hence, it held a vital part in Philippine history. How dare San Juan question the integrity of the National Historical Institute.

This letter only aims to rectify this historical fallacy.

—RENATO B. LUCAS, 1862 Eureka St., Makati City

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'Sabong' politics and the academe

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THERE'S trouble brewing up at the Ifugao State College of Agriculture and Forestry (Iscaf) over the way the next president is being selected, and, surprise, surprise, this is coming from political maneuvering.

I'm reconstructing events using a letter from Dr. Joseph Masangkay, who feels he's been short-changed in the selection process. Let me point out that I don't pick up on personal issues unless there are broader implications for an institution or community. I think that's the case here.

Let's look at what's been happening. In October 2001 there was a call to select the next president of the Iscaf. The selection process was assigned to a search committee constituted by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), headed by Commissioner Carlito Puno. The process was to involve two phases. One involved closed-door interviews with candidates while the other phase would be public presentations where candidates could present their vision and mission to students, alumni, staff, local government officials and communities.

The search committee is supposed to eventually select the top three candidates, whose names would then be submitted to the university's Board of Trustees, who would then cast their votes for the next president.

It's a process that's been used in the country's state colleges and universities, including the University of the Philippines. It allows for democratic consultation while avoiding the pitfalls that come with mass elections, which could easily transform the process into a popularity contest. The idea is to recruit candidates from a wide field, including from outside the institution, something which many shock Filipinos, who tend to prefer keeping the power within the "family."

In the case of the Iscaf, there were seven candidates for the presidency. The interviews and public presentations were held and on Dec. 13, 2001, the search committee made its selection.

The Board of Trustees met on Jan. 11 to elect a new president. Masangkay says the search committee submitted five names to the board, ranking him first. The board members cast their ballots and Masangkay garnered five of the eight members' votes.

Masangkay writes: "After the election I was congratulated by everybody including the BOT Chairman Dr. Manuel Punzal and given instructions to keep in touch with the CHED for further notice. The meeting was adjourned."

The board's decision was made public on Feb. 1 during a meeting of the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (Pasuc). The announcement resulted in a protest from Ifugao Rep. Solomon Chungalao, who pointed out the Board of Trustees held its elections despite the fact that there were two unfilled vacancies for "prominent citizens." He asked that Masangkay's appointment be held in abeyance, pointing out that Masangkay is not an Ifugao. The congressman is said to prefer a Dr. Panangon of the Ifugao College of Arts and Trade, who is the lawmaker's townmate.

A signature campaign has been ongoing with students, faculty, alumni and community representatives endorsing Masangkay's appointment. It hasn't been simply a matter of who got the most votes. Masangkay is one of the country's most accomplished veterinarians and has served UP's College of Veterinary Medicine for more than 20 years, well respected by faculty, students and alumni. I am writing, in fact, as one of his former students, and an alumnus.

Masangkay is not an Ifugao himself but his wife is from the province. I asked him if he was leaving UP and he answered no, he was only going to ask for a "secondment" (a Filipino-English term used in government service, where your primary institution allows you to serve, temporarily, in another office). He wants to serve in Ifugao, which is one of the most neglected provinces in the country, and that kind of motivation is terribly rare these days.

Masangkay says that Chungalao's protest is "moot and academic." Panangon received only one vote during the board's meeting in January, which means that even if he got two more votes from a complete board, he would still trail behind the five that Masangkay got.

Masangkay says it's not just a matter of Chungalao coming in with a favored candidate. He uses the term "*manok*" to refer to the other candidates being pushed by patrons. Certainly, politics affects all state universities and colleges, including UP, but there are usually enough channels that act as checks and balances. State colleges and universities in far-flung provinces are less fortunate, often at the mercy of local politicians who can easily turn institutions of learning into cockfighting arenas.

The Iscaf is now in limbo, the former president having retired on Feb. 18. This is an instance where the CHED needs to act decisively, and soon.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

More Qatar, Emirates flights planned

THE FREEDOM to Fly Coalition (FFC) commends the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) for focusing attention on the Middle East by responding to the needs of Filipinos who work there.

Of the seven million overseas Filipinos, three million are overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). Of this number, 1.2 million work in the Middle East. Despite this number, only 30 flights a week serve the Middle East routes as against the 300 flights a week serving Asian routes. There are 920,000 Filipinos working in different countries in the Far East. The highest number of Filipinos are found in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. The airlines of Qatar and UAE have been asking for more flights to serve our OFWs.

The CAB's decision to increase the entitlements of Qatar Airways and to hold negotiations with Emirates Airways later this month is a welcome development. With flights to the Middle East averaging passenger load factors in the high 80s, and 100 percent during the high season, passengers have to book months in advance in order to get confirmed seats. This situation was aggravated further when in 2001, even before the Sept. 11 incident, Philippine Airlines reduced its Middle East flights in order to increase its services to Australia.

Our OFWs will benefit from this new development. Their remittances contribute to our economic growth. Total annual remittances reached $6 billion in 2000, a 1,029 percent increase from the $546 million in 1979. OFWs have remained the backbone of the positive performance of our gross national product especially during the Asian financial crisis. In the 1990s, much of the country's foreign exchange earnings came from OFW remittances.

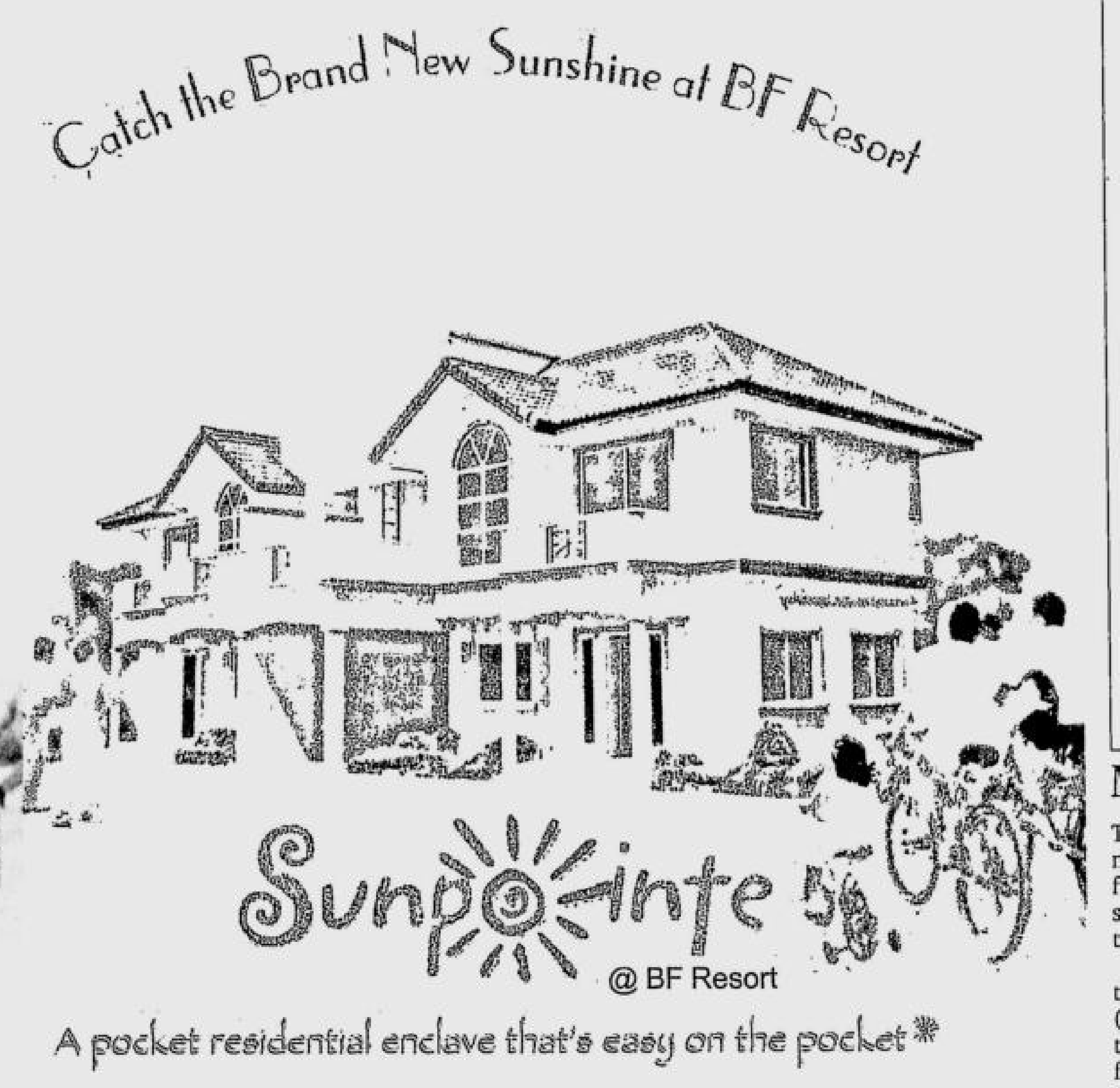
The CAB's decision to increase the entitlements of Qatar Airways and Emirates Airways also comes at a time when there are indications that the number of OFWs in the Middle East will increase at a higher rate than is being experienced now. The UAE is projecting the construction of a brand-new airport, a number of new hotels and resorts and new hospitals. In Qatar, the natural gas industry has decided to go global which means new infrastructure and many other developments. This will mean a higher need for Filipino workers and professionals.

The increase in the entitlements will also increase economic opportunities between Qatar and the Philippines. Whatever products need to be exported can be exported at the earliest possible time with more flights available.

The CAB's decision to grant additional flights to Qatar Airways truly shows that it has the interest of our OFWs at heart. They are our country's "modern-day heroes" who remitted some $6 billion to the Philippines in 2001. It is these remittances that have kept the economy afloat even during the Asian financial crisis.

We hope that the CAB will continue following up on the commitments made by the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to liberalize civil aviation and push for the interests of the 75 million Filipinos who, in the long run, will be its true beneficiaries.

—NARZALINA LIM, chair; MILA ABAD, president; TES HENDERSON, vice president, Freedom to Fly Coalition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Osama is alive —al-Qaida

LONDON—Suspected terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden is alive and well and planning new attacks, his al-Qaida network has warned in a statement published here.

The Arab daily al-Hayat said in its Tuesday edition that it had received a statement from al-Qaida, dated March 26, claiming that 18 US troops had been killed after being taken prisoner by forces of the ousted Taliban regime during fierce fighting in eastern Afghanistan.

"Osama bin Laden is safe and in good health and preparing the next steps of his battle," the statement said.

US President George W. Bush admitted in a television interview Friday that he had "no idea" if bin Laden, the world's most sought-after terror suspect, was dead or alive.

"But I'll tell you this," he told British television, "he's not making a lot of noise these days, and maybe he's dug in one of those holes, but there is not a hole deep enough."

"We're going to get him if he's still alive."

The Saudi-funded newspaper is based in London and printed in several Arab capitals. *AFP*

UK peacekeeper slain in Kabul

LONDON—A British peacekeeper was accidentally shot and killed while serving for the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, the British Ministry of Defense announced late Tuesday.

"It occurred during a foot patrol in Kabul. The casualty was taken to the French hospital facility at the military side of Kabul airport. He has since died," an MOD spokesperson said.

"The matter is under full investigation by the royal military police. That investigation is continuing but we are satisfied that this incident did not involve any party outside of ISAF," she added.

The first British fatality of the Afghan conflict had been part of a patrol in a dangerous western part of the city earlier Tuesday when he received a gunshot to the head at 10:50 a.m.

He was not hit by "hostile fire" but it was not known whether any colleagues were involved in the incident. *AFP*

Mexican president grounded

MEXICO CITY—Angry over several US policies, senators denied President Vicente Fox permission on Tuesday to travel to the United States and Canada—the first time Congress has stopped a Mexican leader from leaving the country.

Lawmakers voted 71-41 against Fox's request to travel next week to the western United States and Canada, saying the trip didn't appear to be worth it.

"Let's not confuse things," Sen. German Sierra of the opposition Institutional Revolutionary Party said. "It's not an official visit. It's not a state visit. It's considered a private visit."

Others criticized Fox's cozy ties with the United States. They cited Mexico's cooperation to secure its northern border against terrorists, and Fox's "passivity" in regard to a recent US Supreme Court ruling that immigrants working illegally in the United States do not have the same rights to restitution.

Opposition lawmakers have complained that he spends too much time traveling—and not enough time dealing with the internal problems of the country. *AP*

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BLUEPRINT FOR JEWISH, PALESTINIAN STATES

Powell takes peace mission to Spain

MADRID—US Secretary of State Colin Powell took his mission for a Middle East ceasefire to Spain on Tuesday, seeking help from the European Union, Russian and UN officials to create a Jewish and a Palestinian state.

He told reporters aboard his plane from Egypt he wanted to speed up moves sketched out in a blueprint for peace under the leadership of former US Sen. George Mitchell.

Powell also made clear Israel's partial pullout from Palestinian towns in the West Bank was not enough, but indicated the United States was not considering sanctions, unlike the European Union.

"We've made it clear however that we think it would be best for them to withdraw now... We're expecting other withdrawals to take place, the sooner the better," he said.

President George W. Bush has called for Israel to pull out "without delay" from all West bank towns and refugee camps seized in a 12-day offensive which Israel says is aimed at rooting out terrorists.

Israeli troops withdrew from two towns, Tulkarm and Qalqilya, on Tuesday.

Ceasefire monitors

In a further sign of heightened US commitment to ending the crisis, Powell reiterated his country's readiness to send ceasefire monitors to the region.

"We're talking about some small numbers of people that we would draw perhaps from our diplomatic presence there, or send in some other individuals from state department or other government agencies," he said.

"They would not be an interpositional force trying to keep people from shooting at each other," he added.

Powell said he had not set an end date for his mission that culminates in talks in Israel and the Palestinian territories from Friday.

"I haven't set a departure date yet. I'm prepared to stay for some while," he added.

Powell said it was necessary to speed up the Mitchell plan, which envisaged a cooling-off period and then a period of confidence-building measures paving the way for political negotiations.

"We're going to have to act a lot quicker because people are looking for... political negotiations and not just a ceasefire," Powell said.

"That is not inconsistent with Mitchell. I just think it accelerates what we've been thinking about."

Hopes of a ceasefire suffered a setback on Tuesday when a Palestinian ambush killed 13 Israeli soldiers.

Powell is expected to hold four days of talks after arriving in Jerusalem on Thursday, shuttling between Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Ramallah, where he is confined by Israeli forces.

Asked if he had threatened Israel with punishment if it ignored US calls to withdraw from West Bank towns, Powell replied: "I have had no conversations of that kind with Prime Minister Sharon."

Spain is the third stop on his tour which began in Morocco on Monday and takes him briefly to Jordan on Thursday.

Powell said he had received pledges of support from the Arab leaders he had met—but also expressions of anger, which he noted had mounted across the Arab world after the Israeli incursion began.

"I wasn't stunned by anything I heard, but I heard it in spades from everybody," he told reporters when asked if he was surprised by the level of Arab anger.

Reuters

WORLDBRIEFS

End of royal era

LONDON—Britain turned on Wednesday to a future without its favorite grandmother after burying the Queen Mother in spectacular fashion and closing the chapter on an entire century of history. The burial of the 101-year-old royal matriarch, who died on Easter Saturday finally drew down the curtain on 20th century Britain and raised the question of how the monarchy will face the 21st without its most popular and pivotal personality. "This really is the end of Britain's sense of itself as a great imperial nation," sociologist and author David Cannadine told Channel 4 News. "It may well be that with the Queen Mother's funeral... we will be burying the British Empire that still exists inside our heads," he added. *Reuters*

Enron auditor pleads guilty

HOUSTON—The dismissed top Andersen accountant who led the firm's Enron Corp. audits pleaded guilty on Tuesday to obstructing justice, joining the US Justice Department as a crucial witness in its probe of the bankrupt energy trader's collapse. David Duncan made his plea before US District Judge Melinda Harmon to a single felony count of obstructing justice by ordering thousands of Enron records destroyed. It is the first plea deal entered in court as part of the three-month-old Justice Department investigation. "I accept that my conduct violated federal criminal law and I'm ready to accept responsibility for it," Duncan told the judge. Duncan faces as much as 10 years in prison and a maximum fine of $250,000 as well as potential restitution costs. Duncan's plea gives federal prosecutors a powerful weapon to use against Andersen, which faces a May 6 trial for a nearly identical charge of obstructing justice, and against Enron or any of its executives that may be charged. *Reuters*

Out of Tigers' lair

KILINOCHCHI, Sri Lanka—Sri Lanka held its breath on Wednesday as the reclusive leader of Tamil Tiger guerrillas prepared to step into the public eye for the first time in over a decade, with peace talks just weeks away. The guerrillas imposed a tight security cordon ahead of the 1100 GMT jungle news conference, an event that has riveted the attention of a nation hoping for a glimpse of rebel chieftain Velupillai Prabhakaran's peace strategy. But the rebels, who are fighting for a homeland for minority Tamils in the north and east of the island, scrapped plans for live national television coverage of the event on security grounds. *Reuters*

Witness vs Tommy

JAKARTA—A witness in the murder trial of former President Suharto's son Tommy linked him on Wednesday to weapons seized at his apartment, contradicting earlier key testimony and adding another twist to this high-profile case. Sofiah Salim, the head of a neighborhood group where Tommy owned an apartment, told the court she'd overheard the manager tell police the stash of weapons belonged to the flamboyant former playboy. "I was asked to witness the raid along with other witnesses... at that time I heard the (police) official ask Hetty Siti Hartika who owned these weapons and Hetty replied they belonged to Tommy," Sofiah told the judge. Tommy is charged with the murder of Supreme Court judge Syafruddin Kartasmita, who had sentenced him to jail for graft, and possession of arms. *Reuters*

Bombs in Bogota

BOGOTA—Three small bombs exploded on the streets of Colombia's capital on Tuesday, injuring a small girl and two adults, in what the president branded a "terrorist" attack by still unknown assailants. Police had been on high alert since early on Tuesday, when attempts to remove a booby-trapped corpse from a small truck detonated a powerful bomb just outside of Bogota and killed two police explosive experts. By noon, small amounts of explosives packed into gas cylinders had detonated in front of a bookstore, a cellular phone company and apartment buildings, injuring three people. The last blast was two blocks from the presidential palace. "The terrorists insist on working against the will of the people, against the international community with total disrespect for human rights," said President Andres Pastrana. *Reuters*

Kim in hospital

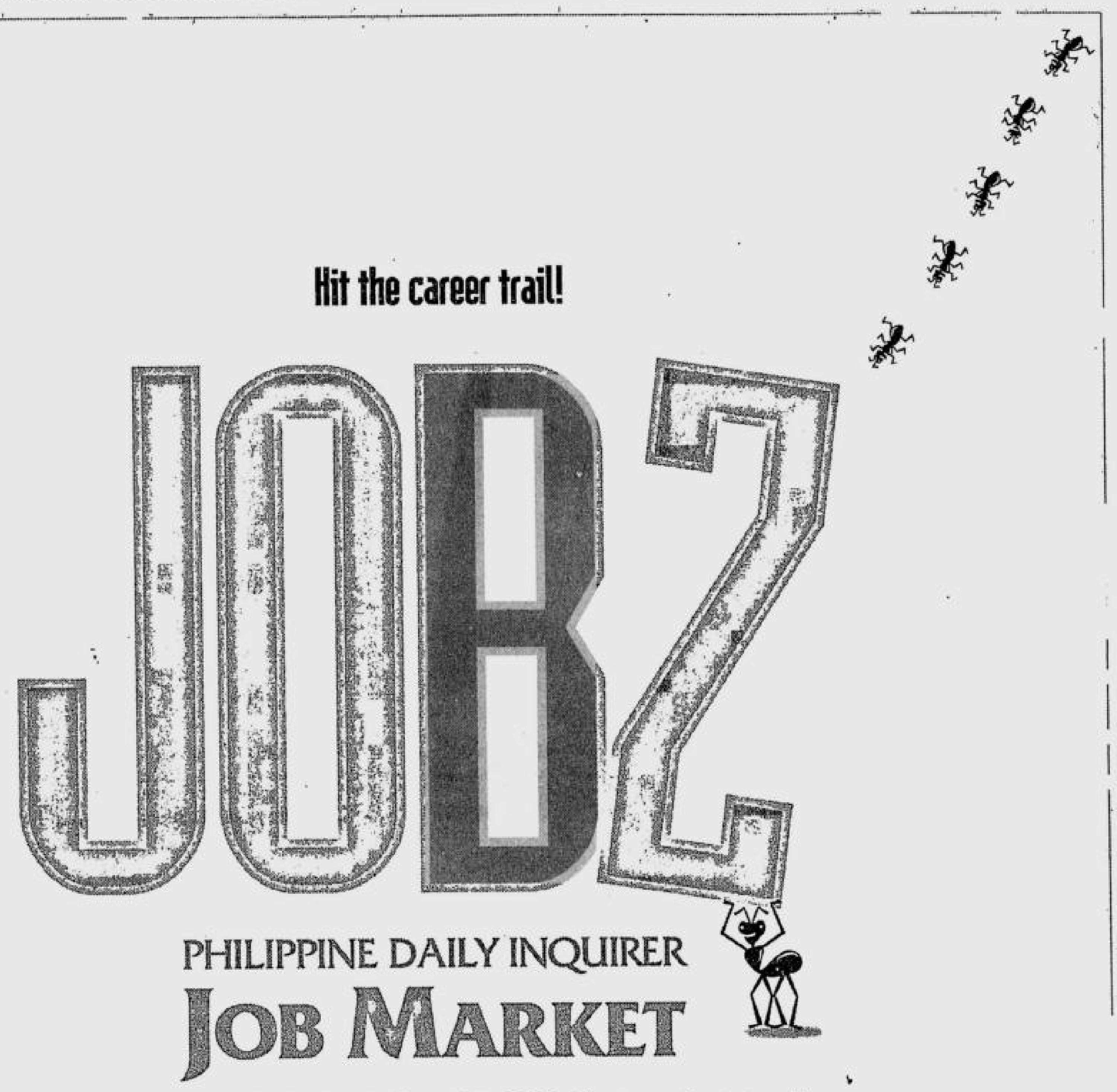
SEOUL—Doctors told South Korean President Kim Dae-jung on Wednesday to cancel engagements for two days, including those connected to North Korea and the soccer World Cup finals, and to rest in hospital, his office said. Presidential spokeswoman Park Sun-sook told reporters the 77-year-old former dissident had been taken to a military hospital near his Blue House residence late on Tuesday for checks and treatment for a strained thigh muscle and digestion problems. *Reuters*

Rampage in Jersey

DOVER TOWNSHIP, New Jersey—A veteran police officer went on a rampage in two New Jersey towns, killing five of his neighbors and wounding two people, police said. Authorities were searching early Wednesday for Edward Lutes, a Seaside Heights police officer for 15 years. He remained at large in a blue 1995 Buick Regal. "We do believe he's armed with firearms," said Dover Township Police Chief Michael Mastronardy. The shootings started in Dover Township around 10 p.m. Tuesday in two homes. Two of the unidentified victims were in a house located next door to Lutes' home and the other three victims were in a house across the street. *AP*

Japan PM in 'hot seat'

TOKYO—Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi faced withering criticism from opposition lawmakers and the media on Wednesday over run of scandals that have hit his ratings and spotlighted the money politics that have long tarnished Japan. The latest victim fell earlier this week when an old Koizumi ally quit parliament, a move likely to further weaken the prime minister's faltering support and undermine his ability to carry out desperately needed reforms. Koichi Kato, a reformist who not so long ago had been touted as a future prime minister, resigned on Monday over allegations of misuse of public funds and the arrest of a former aide for allegedly evading 100 million yen ($760,000) in income tax. *Reuters*



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Batangas villagers fear wired world

By Mei Magsino

Batangas City

"DANGER HIGH VOLTAGE KEEP AWAY." The warning sign haunts villagers of Sta. Rita Kalsada in Batangas City despite assurance from First Gas Power Corp. (FGPC) that its high-power transmission lines, which hang over their houses, do not threaten their health.

The people believe that electromagnetic field (EMF) coming from the lines could cause leukemia and other dreaded diseases.

Their apprehension has heightened since Oct. 16 last year when FGPC's power plant switched from liquid fuel to natural gas, which flows from Camago-Malampaya in Palawan through a 504-km underwater pipeline.

People living within the EMF zone under the transmission lines say they have been experiencing mild shocks, irritability due to the vibrations of the structures, and radio and TV signal disturbances.

The EMF zone covers a radius of 20 meters from the transmission lines and is not supposed to be occupied by people. Some of the lines were erected in Sta. Rita Kalsada, a residential area with a population of about 200.

Links

Since the '90s, the number of studies connecting the EMF to leukemia, brain cancer and lymphoma have increased all over the world.

Lipa Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales, who has been facilitating dialogues between the residents and FGPC officials, has warned of the possible dangers posed by the EMF.

"Nobody has the right to compromise life, environment and health," Rosales said, "and we believe that the EMF from the First Gas transmission lines could be a cause of leukemia and cancer among the residents."

Rosales' first encounter with the EMF was in 1992 when he visited Fr. Robert Waltz, S.J., a batch mate from the St. John Mary Bianey Seminary in Maryland, who was then in Cagayan de Oro City.

Waltz was then dying of leukemia, and even a bone marrow transfusion had not helped.

Rosales anointed Waltz with oil in administering the last rites to him. A week later, the priest died.

Waltz was the 18th in a class of 30 to die of leukemia. Their classroom was located at the part of the seminary building facing an electric transmission line in 1968.

Over a period of 32 years, 18 of the class members have died of the same disease.

Studies undertaken by the World Bank since the '80s and later by the Department of Health in the Philippines have shown that there is no direct evidence linking the EMF to leukemia.

However, according to the same studies, the EMF was a highly suspicious cause of leukemia among people exposed to it.

Rosales concurred with the research premise, but he warned the people to exercise vigilance and avoid exposing themselves to the elements.

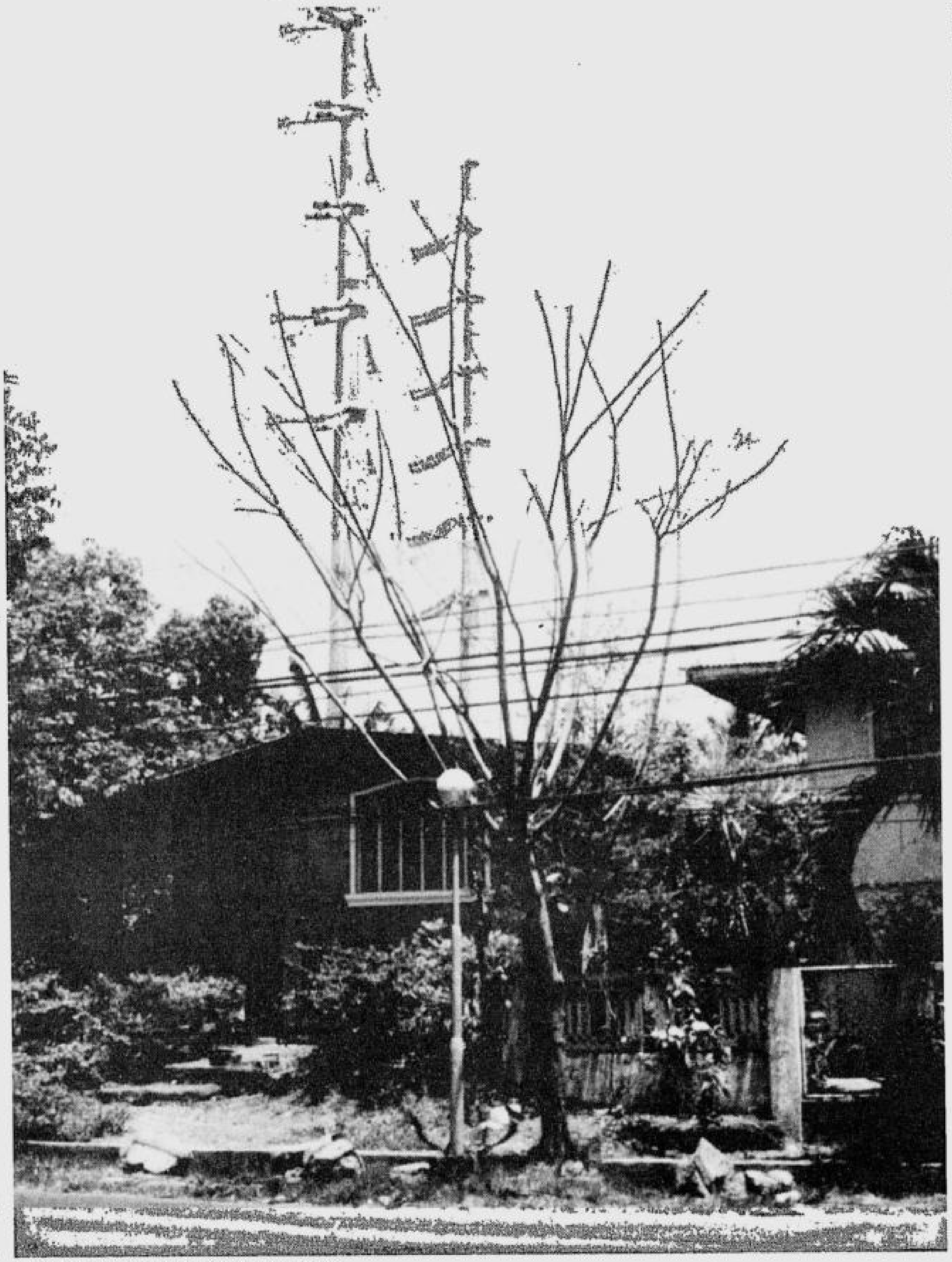
The Green Encyclopedia, published in 1992 by Irene Frank and David Brownstone, said: "In December 1990, the Environment Protection Agency identified a possible causal link between extremely low level of electromagnetic fields and leukemia, lymphoma, and brain cancer. Researches also indicate that exposure to EMF should be minimized."

Below limit

First Gas, which is owned by First Philippine Holdings, draws its natural gas from the Camago-Malampaya field, which was discovered in 1989.

According to findings, the gas reserve could fuel up to 3,000 megawatts (MW) of combined cycle power plants for a period of 20 years.

The Sta. Rita Kalsada power plant, which started commercial production in July 2000, initially ran on diesel fuel and shifted to natural gas when it became available on Oct. 16, 2001.



POWER OF THE FORCE? The 20-meter zone from the high-power transmission lines in Barangay Sta. Rita Kalsada in Batangas City is not supposed to be inhabited by people. Here, the houses are just below the lines. MEI MAGSINO

The 34.5-kilometer transmission lines, which traverse 58 barangays in eight towns and Batangas City, connect the power plant to the Luzon grid.

The transmission system is composed of 14 steel poles and 122 lattice steel towers. The lines are of a 230-kilovolt double circuit type and most of their sections were erected in residential and highly populated areas.

First Gas vice president Ricky Tantoco said it takes 100 micro-tesla, the measurement for the EMF, to be fatal to humans.

The company's power lines emit only 14.3 tesla and abide by the standards set by the World Bank and the DOH, Tantoco said.

First Philippines Holdings vice president Danny Valeriano said "prudent avoidance" was necessary as a safety precaution to one's suspicion of an EMF radiation.

Dr. Alfonso Fabis of the DOH said the EMF was not categorized as a radiation as it has a frequency of as low as 60 hertz. "The EMF, unlike radiation, does not travel."

Citing the International Radiation Protection Agency, Fabis also said there has been no evidence linking the EMF to health-related problems.

Millionaires' row

"I have suggested to First Gas from the start that it should have bought the land within the 20-meter radius. That was to make sure that it would not be blamed in the future," Rosales said.

But First Gas may not be able to buy the land from the residents anymore as the price has started to escalate.

"Residents at Sta. Rita Kalsada would really complain of their fear of the EMF, but when we proposed to buy the land within the 20-meter zone, they raised the price from P2,000 to P50,000 per square meter," a First Gas official said.

This meant that if a resident has 20 square meters inside the zone, he is already a millionaire, the official said.

The project's tight budget allows only for the purchase of land based on its assessed value.

Rosales said the residents and First Gas officials should have agreed on the terms that pertain to money.

"Both parties must consider each other's situation and arrive at an agreement that will be beneficial to both. If the rift between them goes on, it might be long before they realize that any effort to save their family's health would be too late," he said.

Of the 58 barangays in eight municipalities and Batangas City where the 34.5-kilometer transmission lines traverse, only those residing along Velasquez Road in Sta. Rita Kalsada have raised fears over the EMF.

"What really happened in Sta. Rita Kalsada is that the residents have organized themselves to an EMF awareness campaign that says they fear for their health when the real objective was to bleed money from First Gas," a former resident said.

Fear from above

Even Gov. Hermilando Mandanas has denied any direct link between leukemia and the EMF. But he has ordered the provincial health officer to distribute health information forms in Sta. Rita Kalsada.

The forms asked for the residents' family medical history and in case of illness, to which hospital they should be brought.

The residents just received the forms from the barangay hall and have not filled up nor submitted the information sheets.

Mandanas said the medical forms would serve as "our guide in the future if the EMF really has a direct link to leukemia or not. For now, we don't have any proof."

Batangas City Mayor Eduardo Dimacuha said the city government would always side with the people. "But we have to have a solid basis that the EMF is really dangerous to the health of Batangueños."

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10 Happy Glen Loop, Baguio City
Tel. No. (074) 443-9255
Fax No. (074) 443-8971
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Southern Luzon Bureau
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Legazpi City
Tel. No . (052) 820-8402
Fax No. (052) 820-1274
E-mail: inq_bicol@inquirer.com.ph

Across the NATION

Assistant Editor **Tony Bergonia**

Visayas Bureau
c/o Cebu Daily News
18-15 Escario St., Cebu City
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Another fish kill hits Bolinao; aquaculture moratorium ignored

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan—More than two months after a massive fish kill struck Bolinao town's aquaculture industry, another fish kill this week affected thousands of newly stocked *bangus* (milkfish) in the town's fish pens and cages.

Worse, the recent fish kill also affected coral fish like *malaga* and *barangen*, *sapsap* (slipmouth) and *bolasi* (mullet), which are abundant in the town's waters.

Margaret Celeste, an environmental activist and Bolinao resident, said hundreds of coral fish floated dead near the fish cages and pens in Barangay Pilar and other aquaculture areas in the town.

She expressed alarm over the impact of pollution on the town's traditional fishing industry.

Celeste said a complete moratorium on aquaculture operation was needed for the complete recovery of the waters of Bolinao affected by algal bloom and low oxygen level caused by the aquaculture industry.

Fishery experts said algal bloom and the low level of oxygen in the waters surrounding the aquaculture areas have contributed to the massive fish kill in February.

Bolinao Mayor Jesus Celeste also expressed apprehension about the reddish-brown color of the water in the aquaculture areas.

"The sea is still sick," Mayor Celeste said, noting that many fish cage operators insisted on restocking their fishery structures.

"They said they wanted to recoup their losses after the massive fish kill last February. But they are losing their investments and the sea is getting sick," he said.

He said his office could not estimate losses as operators of fish pens and cages no longer report their production losses to the municipal government.

Celeste earlier ordered a moratorium on fishery operation in the town following the February fish kill. However, his order was virtually ignored by operators of fish pens and cages as they continued to re-stock their structures.

The mayor said many operators were affected by the fish kill as the newly stocked *bangus* lived only for a few days.

Celeste claimed that he did not re-stock his own structures to serve as a model for the other operators. "*Pero matitigas ang ulo nila* (They are stubborn)," he said.

He said the coral fishes found dead in the sea could have been "trapped inside the cages and were later thrown into the sea by the caretakers."

Westly Rosario, chief of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources research center in Dagupan City, said *malaga*, *barangen*, *sapsap* and *bolasi* are coral fishes that are easily affected by pollution. ***Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Family of slain rights leader to sue military

DAVAO CITY—The family of slain human rights worker Benjaline Hernandez and her group Karapatan yesterday said murder charges were being readied against soldiers and militiamen responsible for her death.

HERNANDEZ

Military authorities have maintained that Hernandez's death was a result of a legitimate military operation.

Hernandez, 22, deputy secretary general of Karapatan in Southern Mindanao, was killed on Friday in Arakan, Cotabato, along with three *lumad* farmers—Crisanto Amora, Vivian Andrade and Labaon Sinunday.

Joel Virador, secretary general of Karapatan-Southern Mindanao, said his group has started consolidating testimonies from witnesses, whose identities were being withheld.

Virador said charges would also be filed against the suspects before the Commission on Human Rights "Although we can directly file the case with the court . . . we want also (the CHR) to show what (it) can do (about) these human rights violations," Virador told reporters here.

Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson for the 6th Infantry Division, told the INQUIRER that the filing of charges was "highly welcome."

In Manila, the College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP) also demanded justice for Hernandez, a literature student at the Ateneo de Davao University.

The victim was a former editor of Ateneo's official student publication and served as CEGP vice president for Mindanao.

Dani Beltran, Karapatan deputy secretary general, said Hernandez went to Arakan Valley for a month-long research on the impact of the peace process in the community and to follow up on a fact-finding mission on the Tababa massacre which she spearheaded last year.

Beltran related that Hernandez and her companions were about to take lunch when soldiers of the 12th Special Forces and members of a local paramilitary group started firing at their hut at about 12 noon of April 5.

Hernandez and Andrade were unarmed and already wounded when the military allegedly accosted and again shot them at close range, he alleged.

Hernandez had bullet wounds in the neck, chest and left palm, while her face was shattered, Beltran said.

"Her arms were raised upward, a proof of the witnesses' claim that she was begging for her life," he added.

"Beng (Hernandez's nickname) and her companions were massacred. Their tragic death could not be a result of a military encounter," Beltran maintained.

CEGP secretary general Ronalyn Olea found the tragic death of her friend ironic. "Beng, a human rights worker, became a victim of a massacre. It is ironic that Beng should meet her death in the same manner as the people she was researching about were killed."

Major Ando told the INQUIRER that the soldiers were checking on reports about the presence of New People's Army rebels in Sitio Bukatol in Barangay Kinawayan, when they were fired upon.

He said an encounter ensued between the rebels and the soldiers.

Ando said the government men were not aware that Hernandez was inside the hut, where the rebels allegedly positioned themselves. ***Ayan C. Mellejor and Joselle d.R. Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau, and Agnes E. Donato in Manila***

IPADAYON
IMPERYA
RYAN LIM/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

MILITANTS mark "Araw ng Kagitingan" with a march-rally in the downtown area of Davao City.

'The pains of war don't heal'

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

MT. SAMAT, Pilar, Bataan—With tears trickling down his face and his shoulders trembling, William Seeckt told of an anguish that always gets drowned in government-sponsored rites commemorating the Fall of Bataan.

Seeckt, now past his 50s, had always carried that emotional burden—one of mixed grief and yearning for an American father.

His father, already a 60-year-old retired United States sailor with a brood of 11 children, opted to reenlist in the US Army's 31st Infantry Regiment to defend Bataan, the last fortress of the United States Armed Forces in the Far East.

On Tuesday, on the 60th anniversary of Bataan's capture by the Japanese Imperial Army, Seeckt cleared his eyeglasses and stretched his neck to spot old American soldiers in the crowd of veterans.

Without fail, he said, he comes every year to Samat, the last battle and bloody frontier, even when the shrine was not yet built there in the late 1970s.

Always, he said, he had two aims: visit a mass graveyard at the foot of the mountain and chance upon visiting American veterans.

"Every year, I come here. I always hoped of seeing an American guy who might know my father and tell me stories about him. That's all I want to hear. I want to know the father I have never fully known," he told the INQUIRER that, by chance, saw him approached US veterans.

Always, too, not many Americans visited. In the rare occasions that they came, he said, they were not too old to know his father, Frances Seeckt Sr.

Seeckt himself rarely knew him. He was only 8 years old when his father left for the war.

He and his Filipino mother, Pacita Chambing, last saw his father wounded and being treated in a hospital in Barangay Cabcaben in Mariveles town.

Pacita and the entire brood never got the chance to retrieve his corpse when the hospital personnel, who were attending to many dying and dead soldiers, lost no time burying the remains in mass graves.

Seeckt said the family never knew exactly where his father was buried. Out of respect for the dead or perhaps in trying to find some comfort in the heavy feeling of loss, Seeckt said his brood just kept returning to the graveyard at Samat.

He said the mass grave was dug up four decades ago and the remains were transferred to the Libingan ng mga Bayani at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City. This, he added, made it all the more difficult for the family, especially for Pacita, to pay homage to the dead soldiers.

At Fort Bonifacio, no gravestone marks his father's grave.

"We've really no grave to call our own," he said. 'That's the pain of the war. I've lost my father, never enjoyed being with him in life and even in his death."

To the war, the family also lost five siblings, one of whom, Frances Jr., a guerrilla, was captured and beheaded by the Japanese in their hometown of Orion.

The closest connection that Seeckt could make out of his father is an old photograph showing a young sailor at the former Subic Naval Base.

"Every time I think about the losses, the thought makes me sad and angry," he said. "The pains of war don't heal."

GMA to receive 'Golden Grain Award' at CLSU

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—President Macapagal-Arroyo will be conferred the highest nonacademic award of the Central Luzon State University during her visit here today.

The President will be guest of honor and speaker during the CLSU commencement exercises and will be conferred the Golden Grain Award.

In November 1996, Ms Macapagal, then a senator, was conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities by the CLSU.

From the CLSU campus, the President will proceed to the Philippine Rice Research Institute here for the ceremonial harvesting of the *mestizo* hybrid rice.

She will use a lawnmower-type mechanical reaper designed by PhilRice engineers for the harvesting ceremony.

She will also lead the cornerstone-laying ceremony of the institute's seed health laboratory.

From Muñoz, she will go to Barangay M.S. Garcia in Cabanatuan City where an S-211 trainer jet of the Philippine Air Force crashed on Jan. 14. Seven people were killed and several houses were burned in the crash. ***Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Resumption of mining operations on Homonhon Island probed

By Vicente S. Labro
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—The provincial board of Eastern Samar is investigating the resumption of mining operations on Homonhon Island.

The board's action came after Edilberto Grata Jr., chief of the provincial information, culture and tourism office, said the mining operations would hamper plans to promote and package Guiuan town, including Homonhon, as eco-tourism destinations.

Grata raised the problem on Tuesday before the regular meeting of the Eastern Visayas Regional Tourism Council in Marabut, Samar.

Leyte Gov. Remedios Petilla, council chair, voiced a similar concern over the mining operations that, she said, could adversely affect tourist spots in her province.

The council passed a resolution requesting the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to furnish it with a list of mining firms that have been allowed to operate in the region and their areas.

The INQUIRER learned that Heritage Resource and Mining Corp. (HRMC), which stopped operations on the island in 1996 amid protests from residents, has resumed mining chromite two months ago.

The company allegedly applied for a mining permit covering 800 hectares of land but has already started mining in 100 hectares of the area.

Chromite is the most important ore of chromium, a metal that has a wide range of industrial uses, according to the website http://mineral.galleries.com. It is used in the manufacture of stainless steel, paint figments and chrome plating, among other purposes.

Grata said they have already checked with the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources office in Borongan, Eastern Samar, but "there was no file of (the mining firm's) permit."

Barely two months after HRMC reportedly resumed operations in Homonhon, residents of Barangay Casuguran, where chromite mining is now being undertaken, have complained that their drinking water has turned reddish.

They blamed the mining operations for the discoloration.

They also claimed that there was no prior consultation among the residents of Casuguran and other villages on the island was made regarding the reopening of the mining operations.

Albay's oldest woman dies in sleep at 109

BORLAGDATAN ROLY EMBILE

By Roly Embile
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

MALILIPOT, Albay—For one who lived in grinding poverty for more than 100 years, Macaria Borlagdatan of Barangay San Isidro Iraya here was an unusually happy woman when she died Sunday.

She was finally laid to rest yesterday in a poor person's grave.

Borlagdatan died in her sleep last Sunday morning, two weeks after she celebrated her 109th birthday on March 23.

Adela, 50, Borlagdatan's youngest daughter by her second husband, said that since the birthday party tendered for her two weeks ago by a group of senior citizens, Albay women and social welfare officials, her mother had been very happy.

"As far as I can remember, it was the first birthday party my mother ever had but sadly it was to be her last one," Adela, herself already a grandmother of three, said in Bicol.

She said that since that day, her mother had begun to lose appetite, her vision and hearing, already impaired by her advanced aged, had worsened, and she had preferred to lie down on her wooden cot the whole day.

"The day before she died, she refused to take in any food or drink and asked to be bathed and dressed. Last Sunday morning, she just drifted into sleep and died," she said.

She said her death left her, who was solely responsible for the care of her mother, virtually begging to pay off the coffin, the food and everything else and still was in debt for P600.

Last month, Borlagdatan gained instant recognition and admiration from fellow women in Albay when she was proclaimed oldest living woman in the province during the celebration of International Women's Month.

On her 109th birthday, leaders of women's organizations, senior citizens, local government and social work officials headed by provincial board member Gigi Manzanilla tendered a breakfast party for her.

Among the most prized mementos she left behind was a laminated enlarged photocopy of an INQUIRER front-page story titled "Young Albay women honor 108-year-old great-grandmother." It was left tacked in a wall inside her nine-square-meter hut.

Suicide bomber kills 10 in Haifa; 13 Israeli soldiers killed in trap

From page A1

An aide to Sharon put the blame on the blast squarely on Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, saying it "proves once more that he is doing nothing against terrorism and on the contrary is encouraging it."

But the Palestinian government said the bombing was a "natural response to the dirty war" of Sharon.

The explosion went off near Kibbutz Yagur, a communal farm just east of Haifa and about 25 km from the West Bank.

One witness told Israel Radio that he was driving 20 meters behind the bus when he heard the explosion and saw the bus fly about 2 or 3 meters into the air.

"It's a catastrophe. Shrapnel and bits are everywhere," the witness said. "You have no idea what it is to see such a thing. People were thrown in all directions."

Police said the suicide bomber wore an explosives belt and detonated it shortly after boarding the bus.

Shock to Israel's military

The Jenin ambush on Tuesday—where 13 soldiers were killed and seven were wounded—was a shock to the Israeli military that prided itself on its prowess and minimal casualties, but which has been accused by Palestinians of killing untold numbers of people in its onslaught into the city.

A Palestinian fighter inside the camp told Lebanese television that wounded Israeli soldiers had been captured, but he did not say how many. The army has made contacts for their release but Palestinian fighters replied the decision was up to Arafat, who remains trapped inside his office in Ramallah.

The Palestinian resistance in Jenin has won grudging admiration in Israel, where the press compared it to the Jews who held out for three years against the Romans at Masada before committing mass suicide in 74 AD.

Israeli public radio, quoting security sources, said hundreds of Palestinian fighters in the camp were confined to an area measuring just 70 meters by 70 meters.

It said they were led by Islamic Jihad's Jenin chief, Mahmud Tawalbeh, who was freed from the town's prison in February by armed Palestinians.

Residents of the camp said the Jenin fighters—also comprising members of Arafat's Fatah movement and the Hamas group—had vowed to fight it out to the last man.

Buried by bulldozers

Residents contacted by phone said Israeli army bulldozers had razed dozens of houses to open up roads for their armored personnel carriers in the cramped streets of the camp, long seen as a hotbed of militants by Israel.

They said those who refused to leave their condemned homes were buried by the bulldozers. They warned that the death toll could prove to be very high once rescue services are finally allowed in.

Around 100 Palestinian men, women and children were trapped inside a building in the Jenin camp and were appealing to aid groups for help as they came under Israeli fire, a camp resident said.

An AFP reporter close to Jenin saw four Apache helicopters fire six missiles into the camp within 20 minutes early Tuesday.

Warplanes used

In Nablus, Israeli F-16 fighter bombers and Apache helicopters bombarded the al-Yasmina district to wipe out the last pockets of stubborn Palestinian resistance.

It was the first time Sharon deployed his warplanes since launching Operation Defensive Wall on March 29.

The jets fired four missiles into the heart of Nablus, which Israel claimed to have taken over but which was still rocked by sporadic fighting, witnesses said.

The army reverted to F-16 strikes after 13 of its soldiers were killed in the well-planned Jenin ambush.

The air assault was the most ferocious since the arrival of Israeli tanks in Nablus a week ago. It was accompanied by cannon and machine-gun fire from the ground.

Rescue teams searching the ruins of buildings destroyed in the offensive found 14 bodies in the rubble, including a local political leader, Palestinian medics said.

Among the dead were Ribhe Haddad, local leader of the hardline Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Ahmed Hmidan, a colonel in the Palestinian national security service, the medics said.

They said the area, hit by Israeli fighter-bombers late Tuesday after almost a week of stubborn fighting, was completely under Israeli control.

Grenade launchers

In Bethlehem, Israeli troops launched several grenades near the besieged Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where some 200 Palestinian fighters have sought refuge.

It was not immediately clear where the grenades landed, or what damage, if any, they did in and around the church which stands over the spot where Christians believe Jesus Christ was born.

Besides the Palestinian gunmen, some civilians are also trapped inside the church or in adjacent convents, in addition to some 30 Franciscan monks.

Israeli had earlier withdrawn its tanks and troops from the towns of Qalqilya and Tulkarem.

But it strengthened a blockade around the towns and poured into the village of Dura, where at least three Palestinians were killed. It also entered the village of Al-Samur around Hebron.

In the Gaza Strip, which has been mostly quiet during the West Bank offensive, the army said Israeli troops made a brief incursion near the town of Deir El-Balah early yesterday.

It said gunmen opened fire on soldiers who shot back, and an armored bulldozer was sent several hundred meters into Palestinian-ruled territory to demolish an abandoned house from which the firing had originated. The gunmen escaped.

In another sign of his determination, Sharon scrapped his so-called kitchen cabinet, made up of himself, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer, officials said.

He replaced it with a council of party leaders.

The move effectively sidelines the peace-minded Peres. ***Reports from AP, AFP and Reuters***

Media groups slam Israel

PARIS—Several leading press freedom groups have called on the Israeli government to halt its "policy of intimidating journalists" and allow access to Palestinian West Bank areas currently under military attack.

In a joint statement, the groups—including the Foreign Press Association in Jerusalem, the Paris-based Reporters Sans Frontieres and the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists—said "the prolonged attempt to seal off entire cities, where hundreds of thousands of people live, has been excessive, unjustifiable and utterly counterproductive."

The signatories, which also included the International Federation of Journalists, the International Press Institute and the World Association of Newspapers, also called on "Israeli officials to desist from public attacks on the foreign press in which irresponsible generalizations have been employed to criticize the way we conduct our business.

"They only undermine the freedom of the press and endanger journalists," the groups said.

The joint statement also called on Israel to accredit Palestinian journalists working for the foreign press out of the Palestinian territories.

The media groups also called on Palestinian factions to stop confiscating materials and intimidating journalists.

"The foreign press here has a proud and long tradition of excellent and unbiased journalism," the groups said. ***Reports from AFP, AP***

Battle of the camps rages; Israelis meet match

AL-AIN REFUGEE CAMP, West Bank—When Israeli battle tanks rumbled up to this Palestinian refugee camp, they were met with bursts of gunfire, a road strewn with homemade land mines, intersections blocked by burning barricades—exactly the reception that would have been expected.

Israeli soldiers have at times subdued entire Palestinian cities with only minimal resistance, but refugee camps are another story. Crowded, poor and simmering with fury, the camps have proven the deadliest battlegrounds of Israel's 13-day military offensive in the West Bank.

That was the case again on Tuesday when Palestinian militants ambushed Israeli soldiers during intense fighting in the Jenin refugee camp, firing from rooftops and setting off explosions that collapsed a building on troops in an alley. Thirteen Israeli soldiers were killed and nine wounded.

Palestinians, too, are suffering some of their heaviest casualties in the camps. By the estimates of both sides, more than 100 Palestinians—some gunmen, some civilians—have been killed in the Jenin camp during the past week.

Other refugee camps have also been dealt striking blows—like the Balata camp in the West Bank's largest city of Nablus, where residents say tank shells shattered 25 homes and killed six people, and the Al-Ain camp, also in Nablus, where gun battles broke out twice in the past week.

Israeli military incursions into refugee camps are a relatively new phenomenon in the current conflict, taking place only in the last six weeks. But in many ways, camp warfare is the inevitable culmination of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's vow to pursue Palestinian militants wherever they try to seek sanctuary.

Cities within cities

Most of the refugee camps are strongholds of radical Palestinian groups like Hamas, Islamic Jihad and, more recently, the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, which have carried out dozens of attacks against Israelis.

But first and foremost, the refugee camps are home to Palestinian civilians—more than 600,000 live in 27 refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, according to the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees.

Far from being the temporary tent communities the name might suggest, they are cities within cities, full-scale urban zones with schools and hospitals, clinics and mosques.

Without exception, the camps are extremely crowded. Families of 10 or 12 children are not unusual.

Most of the camps stayed within their original boundaries as their populations swelled over the years, with families adding rooms to their cinderblock shanties if they can, until only the narrowest of alleyways remain between rows of houses.

House-to-house

The sheer density of humanity is what makes the camps so dangerous during fighting—primarily for civilians, but also for well-equipped, well-protected Israeli soldiers. The troops can't drive tanks and armored personnel carriers through camp alleyways, so if they want to search house-to-house for gunmen and weapons, they must fan out on foot. ***AP***

'Very positive' news for RP vets

From page A1

benefits for Filipino World War II veterans in the Philippines and in the United States who have nonservice-connected (not combat-related) ailments.

"I'm hopeful that we'll have a very positive announcement to make next week about certain provisions in the bill," Principi told the INQUIRER after a wreath-laying ceremony on Tuesday. The ceremony, honoring the Filipino and American heroes of Bataan, was presided by Philippine Ambassador to the US Albert del Rosario.

"I plan to meet with the President (Bush) this week to talk to him about some of those provisions, and to see if there's a possibility we can support the bill, or provisions of the bill," said Principi, who will be in Manila on April 15-17.

He added: "I think it (Ms Macapagal's letter) will certainly help (in the release of money). The President is very supportive of President Macapagal's tremendous efforts on the war on terrorism. He feels a very strong, close kinship with President Macapagal, and I certainly believe that it will help to move us in the direction to bring equity to the Filipino veterans."

Medical care

Possibly, the restoration of an annual grant-in-aid is what VA Secretary Principi will take up with Ms Macapagal. The US stopped the grant-in-aid, amounting to half a million dollars a year in access to medical care, when the Philippines terminated the Military Bases Agreement in November 1991. But this time, the amount being considered ranges from $3 million to $5 million a year. It is planned to start in the coming fiscal year (this October).

Another measure of the growing importance of the Philippines to the United States is the first-ever presence at the wreath-laying rites of Sen. Inouye, author of several laws granting benefits to Filipino veterans, VA Secretary Principi and Cl[illegible]is M. Castro, Philippines Desk Officer at the State Department. The event took place in Arlington Cemetery, located some 3 miles north of this US capital, at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday (11:30 Tuesday evening, Manila time).

As they've done every year, Filipino area veterans, now reduced to about 15 from a total of 60 several years ago, came to the event. (An average of five veterans die a year.) "I hope the US Congress will pass the Inouye bill this year," Maryland-based veteran Gaudencio Dagdag, who will turn 91 on July 31, told the INQUIRER.

"I'm just waiting for the benefits bill to pass, and then I will return to the Philippines," said veteran Bayani Romulo, ill with diabetes and other age-related disabilities. His wife Candi added, "Most of the veterans want to die in the Philippines, not here."

Letter

Macapagal's letter dated April 3, 2002 was to be hand-delivered to a White House official by del Rosario. Del Rosario returned from Manila Thursday after attending the Malacañang meeting with the visiting American senators, and immediately plunged into preparations for Bataan Day.

"The President's letter to President Bush is very important," Del Rosario told the INQUIRER last Monday but declined to mention its contents. "We're still trying to obtain an appointment with the White House."

A copy of the Macapagal letter obtained by the INQUIRER noted Bush's "commitment to carefully consider all legislative proposals to ensure that the sacrifices of these veterans are recognized." Bush made the commitment during Ms Macapagal's official visit to the White House last Nov. 20.

She wrote: "I met with US Senators Daniel Inouye and Ted Stevens when (they) visited Manila earlier this week. Their views on the Filipino veterans issue were encouraging and I believe we can count on their active support if your Administration will show a determined lead in obtaining legislation on behalf of veterans. I urge that such action be undertaken without delay, since many of our veterans are ill and many of them pass away every year."

Vets' Bill

Since 1946, a US law has retained only service-connected death and disability benefits for Filipino and Filipino-American WW II veterans. Nonservice-connected (not combat-related) benefits were stopped under the Rescission Act of 1946.

Sen. Inouye's bill seeks to amend the Rescission Act.

Inouye's bill, S. 1042, "The Filipino Veterans Benefits Improvement Act," seeks to provide medical care to nonservice-connected Filipino WW II veterans at VA medical facilities and clinics in the United States.

If the US Congress approves the bill this year, qualified Filipino WW II veterans in the Philippines would receive a hundred dollar ($100) monthly USVA disability pension. The proposed amount was envisioned to match the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) "old age pension" of 5,000 pesos.

Also in the Philippines, over 50,000 Filipino WW II veterans and about 10,000 Filipino-American WW II veterans would have access to Manila outpatient clinics for all ailments, including those that are age-related.

Eric Lachica, American Coalition for Filipino Veterans (ACFV) executive director, told the INQUIRER, "The coalition has requested the White House to raise the amount to $5 million, and also to include medical equipment, not just access to medicines only."

"We applaud President Macapagal's letter to President Bush," he added. "Clearly, her letter will greatly boost Ambassador Del Rosario's effective lobbying with the White House and Congress. We are delighted to work with the ambassador, who has graciously briefed us on a regular basis and listened to our views."

WW II veterans and their spouses took part in the wreath-laying ceremony in Arlington Cemetery, led by Patrick G. Ganio, national president of the American Coalition for Filipino Veterans (ACFV); Lachica, son of veteran; Amadeo O. Urbano, president of the Filipino Veterans and Families Foundation Inc. (FVFFI), and Guillermo O. Rumingan, ACFV Service Officer.

Aside from Dagdag and Romulo, other veterans who came from this capital city and the nearby states of Virginia and Maryland were: Celestino Almeda, Joaquin Tejada, Rudy Panaglima, Potenciano Dee, Arturo Acuna, Melchor Poblete, Victor Gozom, Melencio Morales, Constancio Castillo and Angelesio Tugado.

Showing solidarity on the Bataan anniversary were retired Col. Phil Ishio, president of the Japanese American Veterans Association (Java) and Veterans of Foreign Wars representatives, VFW Post 5471 Commander Rudy Ines, VFW Post 5471 past commander and members Jun Pedery, Jose Cadisal and Claudio Arroyo.

The WW II veterans are among those who answered the call to active service in the US Army by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941.

Davao bishop backs PNP chief, not Fr. 'Beppe'

From page A1

Capalla later denied any involvement in the settlement of the coco levy deal.

The deal, which the Presidential Commission on Good Government called "illegal and immoral," also involved Norberto Gonzales, presidential adviser of special concerns, who negotiated the release of Pierantoni.

Capalla said that as early as February, Mendoza's men had told him they were just waiting for an opportunity to rescue Pierantoni after having identified the kidnappers, their whereabouts, and their support groups.

Capalla also said that based on Pierantoni's account, it was clear that no ransom was paid.

"He did not notice any movement of people that would (make it) appear that there was) negotiation for money or ransom," the archbishop said.

'Deliberate handover'

But Pierantoni described his release after 171 days in captivity as a "deliberate handover of me to the negotiators."

His statement was supported by Pagadian City Bishop Zacarias Jimenez.

"There was no encounter, no gunfight. He was brought out. A van picked him up and he was brought to Dipolog," Jimenez said.

Pierantoni yesterday said that his captors and the Army were enemies in the morning but business partners at night.

He said his kidnappers cooperated with soldiers in acquiring weapons and in selling plans about kidnapping.

Pierantoni reiterated that ransom was paid by negotiators to the leader of the Pentagon kidnap group. He said Faizal Marohombsar was paid P5 million.

Sources said the payoff happened in Cotabato City in January.

"I felt sad to hear that you paid the gang of Faizal (Marohombsar)," the Italian priest said in a letter dated March 16.

A police intelligence officer, who was part of the negotiating team, said another payment was made days before Pierantoni was freed.

He said a high-ranking police official paid P12 million for the priest's freedom.

In Butuan City, Interior Secretary Jose Lina expressed confidence that Capalla's statement "would diminish doubts on Pierantoni's recovery."

"The good father (Capalla) was in the best position to say all these things because he knew what was happening from the very start" Lina told delegates to the Caraga Regional Peace and Order Council forum at the Almont Hotel.

He said criticisms "would not diminish the sterling performance of the police responsible for the release."

An anti-crime advocate said it was possible that the Pentagon gang released Pierantoni after receiving a huge ransom payment.

"Based on our experience, no kidnap victim is released without paying ransom. Even American Jeffrey Schilling (a former kidnap victim) reportedly paid P3 million for his release," said the advocate, who asked not to be named.

Citing reliable sources, the advocate said that two weeks before Pierantoni's supposed rescue, government officials negotiated with the kidnappers in Mindanao for the release of the Italian priest through their police assets.

"They discussed the payment of ransom in the vicinity of P15 million," the advocate said, but could not tell if ransom was indeed paid and how much.

Hand to prove

In the House of Representatives, Rep. Gilbert Remulla has called for an inquiry into the release of Pierantoni.

But the vice chair of the committee on defense said the case of Pierantoni should be considered closed because claims of ransom payment were "hard to prove."

"The priest has returned safely so we should direct our efforts to other inquiries," Valenzuela Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo II said. ***Reports from Anthony S. Allada, H. de la Cruz and Franklin A. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau; and TJ Burgonio and Juliet L. Javellana in Manila***

Con men got ransom, says Palace spokesman

By Dona Pazzibugan

AFTER reports persisted that money did change hands for Fr. Giuseppe Pierantoni's release, Malacañang admitted yesterday that some groups and individuals did pay ransom for the Italian priest.

But Press Secretary Rigoberto Tiglao qualified that the money did not reach Pierantoni's actual kidnappers.

He said the persons who paid ransom were led to believe by certain "con men" that they had the priest.

Tiglao insisted the government did not allow ransom to be paid for the priest.

"These reports of ransom payments (came out) because there were certain con men involved," he told in a news briefing yesterday.

"Some people there were duped. They would approach a group who would claim they were holding Pierantoni. What happened was that they gave some amount to this group. But they really did not have Pierantoni. They were duped," he said in Filipino.

He however refused to identify those who allegedly paid ransom.

He said it was hard to go after the "brokers" and recover the ransom.

In the first place, he said, the persons concerned would not admit that they did try to pay ransom.

Gloria rating down in latest SWS survey

From page A1

dropped from 27 to 12, that of the Senate from 18 to 9, that of the House of Representatives from 15 to 5, and that of the Supreme Court from 21 to 15.

On five issues listed in the survey, from the war on terrorism to the development of Mindanao, the Macapagal administration received favorable ratings, including majority votes in four of the five.

The Social Weather Stations of March 2002 had 1,200 statistically representative adult respondents, for an error margin of plus or minus 3 percent and a confidence level of 95 percent.

Spent force?

The survey news was worse for Estrada, whom the business community tagged during a business forum held in Malacañang last March as a "spent (political) force."

The March survey found only 31 percent of the public "trusting" Estrada while 46 percent distrusted him, giving him an unfavorable –15 net trust rating. This was a doubling of his net distrust rating of –7 last November, and continued a steady increase in his net distrust ratings since May.

In the immediate aftermath of the so-called Edsa III and the May 1 assault on Malacañang, Estrada enjoyed his first positive net trust rating since his ouster, at 3. His ratings have been negative since then, and the March 2002 survey confirms the downtrend.

Worse, Estrada's March 2002 net trust ratings were unfavorable in all regional groups and all social classes—including his traditional bailiwick, Class E, which, as the SWS reported, "changed direction from 3 in November to –6 in March 2002."

The only regional group which reported a favorable net trust rating for Estrada in November—Mindanao, which registered a 4—has also completely changed direction in March, with a net trust rating of –21.

Estrada's fortunes improved slightly in the National Capital Region, with his net trust rating going up from –19 to –12 largely as a result of more Metro Manilans joining the ranks of the undecided.

The Visayas bloc continued to mistrust Estrada the most, with a net trust rating of –37, up from –22.

NCR downbeat

Ms Macapagal took a heavy beating in Metro Manila, the only regional bloc to give her an unfavorable net rating: -11, down from 19 in November. The national capital has traditionally been viewed as the bellwether of political opposition to any incumbent administration, but Tiglao described the SWS statement that there was no sign that public sympathy was about to shift to the opposition as "significant."

"The SWS survey also supports our assessment that we're way past the period of political volatility and beyond threats to our constitutional system," Tiglao said.

"Those daydreaming of another round of political attacks against this administration should take note of the SWS findings, so they won't waste their money," he added.

The SWS said the drop in the President's net rating "occurred mainly in Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon. Support for her remained strong in the middle-to-upper ABC classes, and in the Visayas."

A majority of the public in the Visayas—61 percent—declared themselves satisfied with her performance, improving her net trust rating in the area from 35 in November to 40 in March. A nominal majority of the ABC classes—51 percent—said they were satisfied, raising her net rating in the ABC classes from 21 to 24.

Class E gives failing marks

Her net rating among Class E respondents, however, fell markedly from 26 to 10.

"The poor can't wait," Tiglao said in his press briefing. "We have to find ways and means to immediately help them, the President said."

The SWS poll also found most Filipinos satisfied with her performance in addressing five major problems.

The survey reported that a majority of the public thought she was either "very serious" or "somewhat serious" in fighting terrorism (64 percent); battling illegal drugs (55 percent); helping the poor (52 percent); and developing Mindanao (52 percent).

A "plurality" of 49 percent said the President was either "very serious" or "somewhat serious" in fighting corruption in government.

IMF lauds Macapagal handling . . .

From page A1

orous action was needed to stop the erosion of tax revenues and to reduce the amount of bad loans in the banking sector.

"Nonetheless, the Philippine economy turned in a robust performance" during a turbulent year, noted the International Monetary Fund review, with gross domestic product in 2001 growing by an estimated 3.2 percent. The country had been hit last year by a contraction of the global information technology industry, a slump in private funds flowing to emerging markets and the Sept. 11 terror attacks, it said.

In its annual assessment of the Philippine economy, the Washington-based lender praised the country for undertaking market-oriented reforms, following prudent macroeconomic policies and rigorously pursuing fiscal targets. It also welcomed the adoption, last January, of formal inflation targeting.

But the IMF said more reforms were needed to protect the economy from future shocks.

"Directors saw reversing the long slide in fiscal revenues to be a key challenge," the report said. What this means in layman's terms is that, in the IMF's view, the next challenge for the Philippines is to dramatically raise tax revenues.

The IMF urged the government to restore selected excise taxes to their real levels and even apply an excise tax on petroleum. Over the medium term, the government should also consider raising the value-added tax rate to improve revenue collections, the multilateral institution said.

The government seeks to contain its budget deficit to P130 billion this year, after virtually meeting its P145-billion deficit target last year.

Healthy banks

The IMF also emphasized the need to strengthen the health of the banking system through proposed amendments to the central bank charter, particularly to give regulators greater power in dealing with problem banks.

It welcomed efforts to facilitate loan workouts with proposed legislation to make it easier to form private asset management corporations and to modernize the bankruptcy code. But "directors stressed the importance of pushing through the proposed amendments to the central bank charter to give supervisors greater power to deal with problem banks."

The fund's directors singled out the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for its prudent conduct of monetary policy.

The directors stressed the need for continued progress with structural reforms and expressed support for the issuance of rules and regulations to accompany the landmark power sector reform that could encourage higher investment and growth in the sector.

The government should also aim to limit spending while maintaining poverty-reduction efforts, the report said.

"(The IMF directors) expressed concern, however, that any restraint might be difficult to reconcile with the government's plans for reducing poverty, further stimulating growth and improving infrastructure," the report noted.

The Philippines "graduated" from its last IMF funding program in 2000. The government agreed, however, to undergo post-program monitoring by the IMF in order to earn the so-called seal of good housekeeping. No new loans are tied up in the monitoring effort.

Post-program monitoring provides for frequent consultations between the IMF and "graduate" countries which still have outstanding loans with the fund.

In a press briefing yesterday, IMF representative to the Philippines Sean Nolan echoed the sentiments of the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank that the Philippines could meet its growth targets this year.

"The macroeconomic targets look to be achievable if the lead sectors perform as envisaged, the external environment improves over the course of the year and budgetary targets are achieved," Nolan said.

He said that growth should come from agriculture, services and telecommunications. ***With reports from Reuters, AFP***

VAL HANDUMON

EXHORTING the graduates to help build the nation, President Macapagal is the guest of honor at the Manuel Enverga University Foundation in Lucena City.

PCGG set to refile case against De Venecia

From page A1

The spokesperson of De Venecia, who is still out of the country, reiterated yesterday a statement given by Land Oil Resources Corp., represented by its president Ambrocio Collado, that the Speaker had left Landoil in 1985 and thus, had nothing to do with its subsequent actions, including the compromise agreement with the PCGG.

De Venecia's spokesperson, Noel Albano, said he contacted Landoil officials and learned that Landoil had actually been cooperating with the PCGG.

Aside from De Venecia, two other Marcos cronies—Alejandro Ganut Jr. and Anos Fonacier—will be charged in court for non-compliance with the compromise agreements with the PCGG.

The plan to revive the suit against De Venecia came after the PCGG finished its review of the 26 compromise agreements entered into by the previous PCGG administrations with the so-called Marcos cronies.

The PCGG had been following up until recently the information it got that Landoil had already settled its $700-million damage suit against the US-based insurance broker Alexander and Alexander in New York.

Avena said the PCGG could not even get the date of the settlement and the amount of the proceeds that Landoil got from the case because a Landoil's lawyer cited "lawyer-client" relationship for not providing the PCGG details of the settlement.

"The case of De Venecia was (Civil Case No.) 0020. He was dropped as defendant because of the compromise agreement (in 1988)," Avena said.

De Venecia was sued for taking undue advantage of his ties to the Marcoses and for allegedly using for his own benefit loans Landoil and its subsidiaries borrowed from foreign banks and guaranteed by the Marcos administration.

De Venecia was dropped from the case on Sept. 8, 1989 by the Sandiganbayan's second division. The other defendants were Roberto V. Ongpin, Cesar Zalamea, Rosendo Bondoc, Ruben Ancheta (now deceased), Placido Mapa, Cesar Virata, Jaime Laya—all officers of the Philippine Export and Foreign Loan Guarantee Corp. (Philguarantee), a government-owned and controlled corporation, that provided the guarantee for De Venecia's alleged behest loans—and former First Lady Imelda Marcos. They were also dropped from the case when the Sandiganbayan dismissed it on Dec. 4, 1989.

The government got only P13 million from the 1988 Landoil compromise agreement, representing "a portion of Landoil's recovery from an arbitration proceeding which Landoil had caused to be instituted in London against the Lloyd's Syndicate of Insurance Underwriters."

But Landoil failed to fulfill its other obligations as stated in the deed of assignment. First, that it would transfer up to 45 percent of the total outstanding issued and subscribed capital stock of the firm, which had been identified as Marcos'.

Second, that it would immediately assign, transfer and convey to the PCGG the entire proceeds of (its) claims in the New York case, which Landoil instituted against the insurance brokers, particularly the firm of Alexander and Alexander.

Landoil should also have transferred the "entire proceeds of its contract receivables from all of the assignors' construction and other projects in the Middle East and elsewhere" minus the settlement of liens for unpaid wages or salaries and ordinary administrative overhead costs and lawyers' expenses.

"There were no proceeds turned over (to the PCGG). They gave a reason for that. Our information was that it was settled. We don't even know the date. It was Landoil vs Alexander and Alexander. When they settled this abroad, the PCGG was not a part of it. We were not officially informed, and then we asked Landoil for an accounting," Avena said.

Confidential

"The one who answered was Attorney Agcaoili, the lawyer for Landoil. His answer was that this was confidential. This is an attorney-client relationship, that the attorney-client privilege prevents him from revealing what his client did or did not do," she said.

"We were asking them? Did you already settle the case? If you already did, where are the proceeds? Please account for this because it should be turned over (to the PCGG)," she said.

Avena noted that the Landoil lawyer had said that he could "not divulge any of that because we owe confidentiality to our client."

"To the lawyer, that's another matter. He is not bound to the compromise agreement. Landoil is bound (to it), so if ever there is an entity we will run after, it is Landoil," Avena said.

Records of the case in the United States were already placed in the National Archives Record Administration.

"If you want to dig up the records, that's where it will be. But it won't be easy to do that because you have to have people to physically do it. You have to deputize the people at the embassy (to do that)," Avena said.

"When I was there last year, we tried to follow it up," she said.

Iran-Iraq war

The Landoil claims against the insurers involve millions of dollars concerning its overseas contracts. The company used to recruit workers who were displaced when the Gulf War and the Iran-Iraq war broke out. The workers were covered by insurance claims.

Landoil obtained in 1982 to 1983 insurance coverage against the risk of non-payment of its contract receivables from its various construction and other projects in the Middle East. The insurance coverage was obtained from the Lloyds of London syndicate of underwriters with a face value of $50 million and for which Landoil paid a premium of $2 million.

"In consequence of the unjustified and illegal refusal of the abovenamed insurer to pay the insurance claims of the Landoil Group, the latter has caused to be filed in New York, a damage suit for $700 million against the insurance broker, namely the firm of Alexander and Alexander," said the deed of assignment.

Collado and Azcuna

The deed of assignment was executed by Landoil Resources Corp. represented by its president, Ambrosio Collado, and the PCGG then represented by its acting chair Adolfo Azcuna.

The deed of assignment called for the dismissal of Civil Case No. 0020 against De Venecia. But it had a clause that said: "however, such case shall be deemed automatically reinstated in the event of non-compliance by any of the Assignors with any of its obligations and undertaking hereunder."

Avena said that the "understanding always was (that) if the deed of assignment was not complied with fully, the government can rescind it, and then sue again."

"So in order to make De Venecia accountable, we have to reinclude him in Civil Case No. 0020," she said.

Avena said that the PCGG was already in the process of rescinding the agreement.

Demand letter

She said the PCGG had already sent a demand letter to Landoil asking it to comply with the deed of assignment.

"Recently, the answer was (like this): `In the deed of assignment, we assigned to you the proceeds of the New York case. Therefore, we complied with it because we had already assigned it,'" she said.

In the original Civil Case No. 0020, De Venecia, who allegedly took advantage of his relationship with the late President Ferdinand Marcos and former First Lady Imelda Marcos, was said to have "organized and headed the Landoil Group, a big business conglomerate engaged in a wide range of economic activity, such as petroleum exploration and engineering, port management and operation, and other services."

"To finance his huge domestic and overseas operations, defendant Jose de Venecia, acting through the Land Oil Group, borrowed enormous amounts in foreign currency denominated loans from several syndicates of international banks such as, but not limited to, Arab Banking Corp., Ahli Bank of Kuwait, Credit Suisse First of Boston, Saudi Cairo Bank, Mellon Bank and the Bank of Montreal," the complaint, which was filed on July 24, 1987, said.

"In view of the magnitude of the loans and the project risks involved, the banks required that their loans be fully covered by the absolute and unconditional guarantee of the government of the Republic of the Philippines," it said.

Accordingly, De Venecia applied for Philippine government guarantee from Philguarantee.

He allegedly misused the proceeds of the loans by "diverting them to other uses and appropriation for his own personal benefit."

Empty bag

"As a result of gross mismanagement and wanton diversion of the loans, the major operations of the Land Oil Group collapsed. Landoil defaulted in the payment of its maturing principal and interests amortization and, like the man holding the proverbial empty bag, Philguarantee had to advance on its guarantee using for this purpose millions of pesos in scarce government and taxpayers' money," said the civil complaint against De Venecia and Philguarantee officials.

Albano said Collado wrote Avena on Dec. 14, 2001 to inform the PCGG that Landoil had not yet recovered the damage claims it had filed with the United Nations Compensation Committee (UNCC).

Collado wrote Avena in response to the PCGG's letter to Landoil dated Dec. 3, 2001.

In the same letter of Collado to Avena, he said that Landoil was standing by its commitment to the PCGG.

Albano said the PCGG and Landoil entered into an agreement in 1988 that proceeds of a $75 million in damage claims that Landoil had filed with the UNCC as a result of the Gulf War in 1990 would be transferred to the PCGG. ***With a report from Christine Avendaño***

Labor Day on April 29? Workers upset

From page A1

domestic tourism through "three-day weekends."

The President has yet to issue the proclamation. But Tiglao said that "for practical purposes and to stimulate the economy, (she) decided to make it a three-day weekend."

But labor groups yesterday described the holiday switch as "a grand insult to workers."

The militant Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) said it merely magnified President Macapagal-Arroyo's supposed fear of the nationwide protests planned by major labor groups against the administration's "anti-worker policies."

On the other hand, the moderate Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) said it would seek an audience with the President to ask her to reconsider her decision.

But Tiglao was quick to deny that the switch was meant to avert the traditional Labor Day rallies.

He said it was likewise "not accurate to say that we are stopping the celebrations on May 1."

He also denied that the administration wanted to take the wind out of Joseph Estrada's supporters, who were supposedly mobilizing to mark the first anniversary of the May 1 siege of Malacañang.

Daydream

According to Tiglao, labor groups can still find a way to mark Labor Day.

He said members of the TUCP could ask their employers for a "one- or two-hour break" to attend the official Labor Day ceremonies at Rizal Park.

"There's no real concern that May 1 will be a very newsy day," he said. "We believe that it will be celebrated as we have celebrated it in the past years—not in the past year (when pro-Estrada forces attacked Malacañang) but the years preceding."

Tiglao chided the militant labor groups for protesting the holiday switch.

"No one complained when we moved the April 9 holiday to April 8. Araw ng Kagitingan is, I think, as important as (Labor Day)," he pointed out.

Asked if Malacañang felt threatened by the planned pro-Estrada mass action on May 1, Tiglao said: "Not at all."

"They're starting to daydream," he added. "We don't meddle with holidays just for some threat that's being exaggerated."

Tiglao said it was Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, "not the security adviser (Roilo Golez) or the Philippine National Police," who had recommended the Labor Day holiday switch. Nevertheless, he said, Malacañang was again preparing for any contingency on May 1, "given our penchant for believing that history will repeat itself to the day, which almost always never happens."

Workers' struggles

May 1 is observed as the International Day of Workers, in commemoration of the massive laborers' demonstrations on that day in 1886 at the Haymarket Square in Chicago in the United States.

On that day, many of the workers who were protesting the 12-hour daily work schedule were killed or injured.

"It is highly offensive that the only occasion highlighting the significant struggles of workers for their rights and welfare was rudely belittled by (the President) just to advance her twisted holiday economics," KMU secretary general Elmer Labog said.

Labog said Labor Day was meant as an occasion to air workers' grievances, and was not just one of the President's special holidays.

He served notice that the mass demonstrations of militant workers would proceed as planned on May 1.

The TUCP said the government was taking away the significance of the occasion by changing the date of the legal holiday observed worldwide.

It said the Philippines would be the only country in the world celebrating Labor Day ahead of the actual date.

"We don't want a situation where the occasion will be treated like any other holiday spent on rest and recreation," the TUCP said in a statement. "Labor Day is more than rest; it is about asserting workers' rights and focusing on the problems and issues (they face)."

However, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines praised Malacañang for its "successful implementation" of the three-day weekends promoting its holiday economics.

Ecop president Donald Dee said the holiday proclamations by the President had enabled the government to not only maximize productivity but also generate savings.

GMA's bad-hair day

From page A1

Broadcasting Corp.-Asia Pacific.

At least twice in the interview run yesterday in the program "Focus" over cable TV, the President put her hand on her face as though bored. At one point, she looked past the camera and gazed at something beyond her desk.

She also read from her notes once during the interview, which dwelled on her administration's campaign against the Abu Sayyaf and her decision to allow the presence of American troops in the country.

TV watchers wondered: Was she sick and tired of the subject? Or was her less than sunny disposition a result of advance information that her ratings had dropped in a recent survey of the Social Weather Stations?

No such thing, as far as Press Secretary Rigoberto Tiglao is concerned.

"It could be bad lighting," he said, amused, and noted that the interview was taped last Monday.

Asked whether something was bothering his boss, Tiglao said: "No. Nothing in particular."

In an attempt to explain the presidential gloom, he said "she is very expressive when she is in deep thought."

Impatient

That patience is not exactly one of the President's virtues also showed in some of her answers during the interview.

Asked whether she believed that the Al-Qaida was continuing to fund the Abu Sayyaf, she said: "You know I don't go by 'do I believe' or 'do I not believe.' The important thing is not whether al-Qaida is sending money. There is terrorism in southwestern Philippines, and we must annihilate it. So it's immaterial..."

To the question of whether she thought she was winning the battle, this was her response: "I don't want to make a judgment. I just want to continue this battle until finally it (the Abu Sayyaf) is totally annihilated and neutralized."

Of course, a discourse by the President on fighting terrorism will not be complete without her mouthing her standard line that it is "inter-linked with the fight against poverty."

Displaying the stuff that has somehow earned her the sobriquet "Asia's Iron Lady," the President admitted that she was paying a political price for allowing the presence of US forces in the country.

"Well, yes, that's true," she said. "I pay political capital, but I think that's what leaders are supposed to do. We have to pay political capital to do what is right."

64-round card to banner Fistorama return at Cantada arena

FISTORAMA, a popular weekly boxing show for almost two decades starting in the Sixties, will make a dramatic return on Sunday at the Joe Cantada Boxing Arena of the Cantada Sports Center in Taguig, Metro Manila.

This was bared by Edgardo "Boy" Cantada, whose license as boxing promoter was approved by the Games and Amusements Board yesterday.

"We will celebrate Fistorama's comeback with an eight-bout, 64-round card starting at 6 p.m. to be capped by a double main event starring world contender Noel Tuñacao," Cantada said. "This will be the Joe Cantada Sports' initial presentation."

Tuñacao, No. 5 mini-flyweight in the World Boxing Council and International Boxing Federation and No. 13 by the World Boxing Association, will fight Rolando Toyogon in the card's top event scheduled for 10 rounds.

"Actually, Tuñacao will use the Toyogan fight as a tune-up before challenging WBC mini-flyweight champion Oscar Lopez sometime this year," Cantada said.

The other main event, also for 10 rounds, will feature Rodel Mayol, the WBC No. 14 mini-flyweight, and Roger Maldecir, the country's No. 6 junior flyweight.

"Fistorama's revival is dedicated to my brother Joe, an avid boxing buff, as the program will also do its share in reviving interest in a sport that has put the country to the world sporting map," said Cantada.

Veteran analyst and Manila Standard sports columnist Zacarias "Taby" Tabaniag, Philippine Daily Inquirer sports editor Al S. Mendoza and seasoned announcer Ed Picson will compose the TV panel.

The double supporting main event—both for 10 rounds—will pit reigning Philippine junior middleweight champion Ernie Alesna against RP No. 3 junior welterweight Ranel Mercado and No. 3 lightweight Jun Geraldino against No. 4 junior lightweight Al Deliguer.

The preliminary bouts will feature Benjie Concepcion and Alex Egina for eight rounds, Randy Casinillo and Carlo Jayme for six, Dexter Casinillo and Joel Consulta also for six and Leonel Casinillo and Rogelio Eret for four.

SPORTSWATCH

Xavier's Ho gains tennis semis

FOURTH seed Joshua Tan Ho of Xavier School defeated Rodell Joseph Navarro, 6-2, 6-1, yesterday to enter the boys' 12-under semifinals in the Juntaphil Cup age-group tennis tournament at the Baguio Tennis Club. Tan Ho will meet top seed Mark Balce, who scored a 6-2, 6-2 win over Hommer Paulo Perez. In other matches, second seed Gerard Michael Ngo downed Gerard Pinili, 6-2, 6-4, to advance against third pick Patrick Arevalo, a 6-3, 6-3 winner over Jose Lorenzo Opulencia. In the girls division, No. 1 Jessica Agra outclassed Anna Tan, 6-0, 6-1, to forge a semifinal showdown with No. 4 Sarah Jane Lim, who beat Nikki Antolin, 6-1, 6-1. No. 2 Bambi Zoleta blanked Joan Therese Opulencia, 6-0, 6-0, to advance against No. 3 Julie Em Botor, who beat Phoebe Kaye Yamada, 6-0, 6-0.

Davao booters blank Laguna

DAVAO'S talented lady booters opened their bid for a third straight title by blanking Laguna, 9-0, at the start of the 6th National Women's Championship at the Ateneo field. National player Sheila Barlovento sparked the rout by scoring five goals in the second, 16th, 21st, 38th and 54th minute. Former national booter Leonor Satorre came through with two markers (12th and 29th) while Simonette Gaspay and Gladys Casual contributed one each in the 14th and 23rd, respectively. Negros Occidental blasted Masbate, 20-0, in the other game at Ateneo as Lyka Joehico and Paula Alonzo knocked in six and four goals, respectively. At the Philsports in Pasig City, Zamboanga nipped Camarines Norte, 1-0, while Negros Oriental and Baguio battled to a scoreless draw.

Tanauan hosting USPTA

THE FIRST leg of the United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA) Goodwill Tennis Tours 3 clinics will be held April 18-20 in Tanauan, Batangas. Noted instructors Elmer Dolera, Ted Sayrahder and Eddie Pasternak, who will arrive next week from the US, will conduct the clinics to be hosted by the Tanauan Tennis Club and the Tanauan City Sports Commission. For details, call (043) 4051269. Other stops of the Tour are Puerto Princesa, Palawan, Iloilo City, Bacolod City, Dumaguete City, Cebu City and Tagbilaran, Bohol. Businessman Bobby Castillo is among the supporters of the Tanauan clinics.

Jao tops superbike races

ROSARIO, Batangas—Defending champion Jolet Jao won both races of the Shell Advance Superbike Series recently in the kickoff of the 2002 Casino Filipino Grand Prix at the Batangas Racing Circuit here. The multi-titled Jao jacked up with a speed of 1:45.775 to control the tempo from the start to win in the Expert class of this event organized by Namssa. Briton Rod Scott tried to catch up with Jao, posting a fastest laptime of 1:48.763 on the seventh lap but Jao rode consistently on the way to the finish line.

Scott settled for second, clocking 22:31.070 while Toti Alberto checked in third with 22:44.504. Jose Reyes finished fourth with 22:52.906, while sensational Wacky "The Superwoman" del Rosario wound up fifth on her first try in the Expert class with 23:04.818. Jao proved faster in the second race, registering 17:14.137 for his back-to-back triumph.

7 divisions mark Ateneo cagefest

THE ATENEO Basketball League culminates its 2002 season on April 13 with the staging of seven division championships from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Blue Eagle Gym. A total of 53 teams grouped into seven divisions joined this year's tournament. Sponsoring the event are Chikka, Del Monte 202 Juice, Edsamail, Gentxt, Leslie Corporation, Lumiglow, MyGlobe, Nestea, Nestle Ice Cream, Purefoods Hotdogs, San Miguel Beer, Scheds.com, Strepsils, Tang, Universal Robina Corporation and Viva Mineral Water. For details, visit the ABL website at www.atenista.net/abl.

NCFP chess registration ends April 13

TORRE

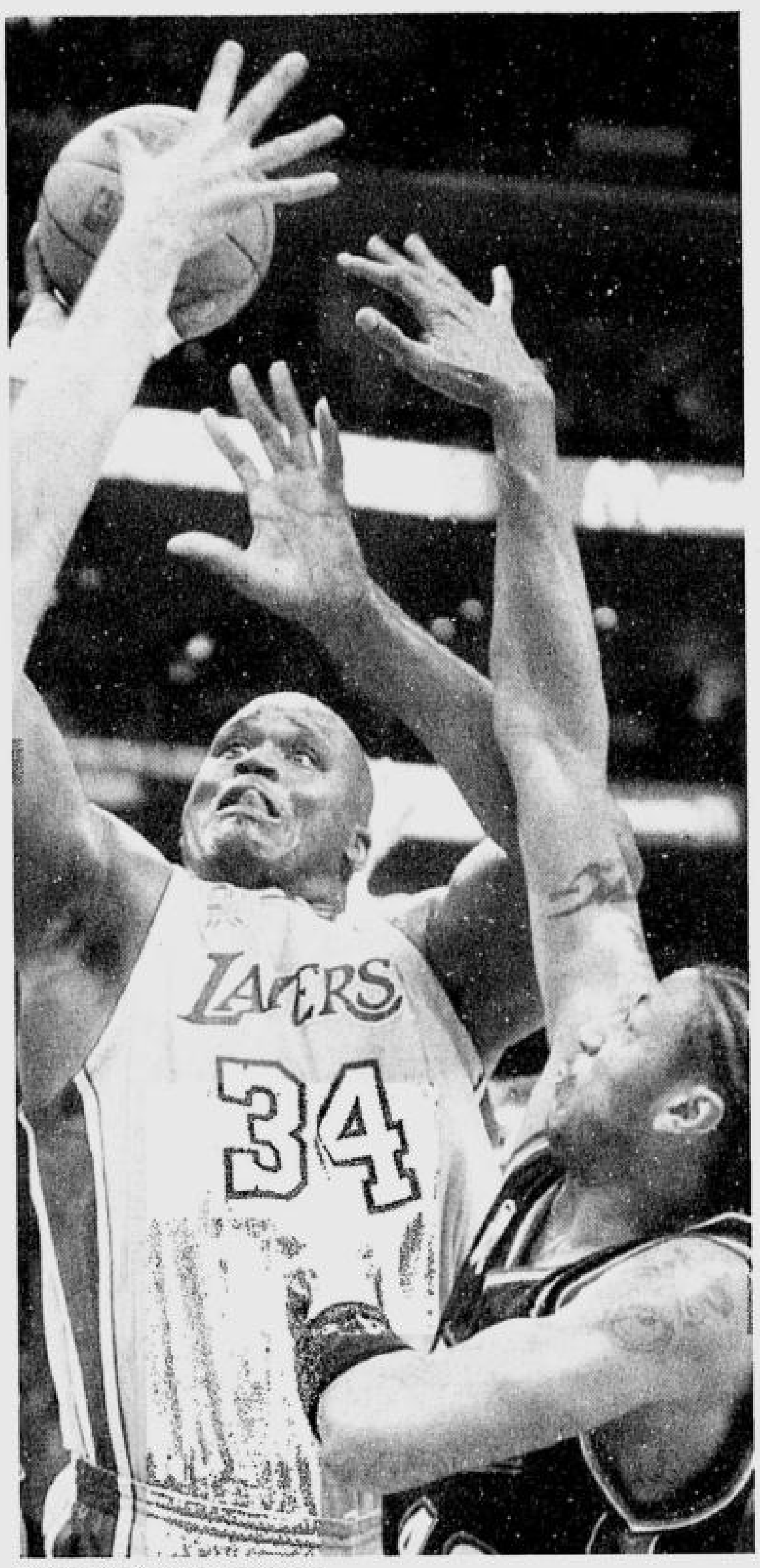
THE NATIONAL Chess Federation of the Philippines announced yesterday that the registration for the semifinal round of the 2002 National Championships for men and women's divisions will end at 5 p.m. on April 13. Registration is now going on at the NCFP office, 4th Floor, Tempus Bldg. II, 21-A Matalino St., Diliman, Quezon City. For more details, call 435-1113 to 14. The tournament, which will also be the basis for the composition of the Philippine teams to the 2002 World Chess Olympiad in Bled, Slovenia in October, will start on April 15. The Top 10 finishers in both divisions will advance to the grand finals, joining the seeded players that include Grandmasters Eugene Torre, Joey Antonio, Bong Villamayor and junior standouts IM Mark Paragua, NM John Paul Gomez and NM Oliver Barbosa in the men's division, and WIMs Arianne Caoili, Beverly Mendoza, Cristine Rose Mariano and WNM Joan Toledo in the women's division.

Las Piñas 4-cocker slated May 1

SOME 40 Metro Manila cockers and gamefowl breeders are invited to compete in the Las Piñas Cockpit special 4-cock derby on May 1. Sponsor is Casino Filipino–Parañaque. Proceeds of the derby will go to Las Piñas City's Clean and Green project of Mayor Nene Aguilar. Emet San Juan, a member of the Galleros de Manila, is derby co-host. The entry fee is P11,000. Cash prizes total P400,000. The champions will receive casino chips worth P50,000 from CF-Parañaque. Paying patrons will likewise get casino chips. For other details, call 873-1040, 871-4343 or 871-4345.

11-year-old girl is Games star

AN 11-YEAR-OLD girl, who only started taking up gymnastics a week ago, won three gold medals in gymnastics to become the most promising gymnast of the 1st Manila Youth Games yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Gymnastics Center. Maricris Reyes Batallones, second of three children of jewellers Oscar and Bernadette Battalones of Zone 675, District V in Ermita, Manila, captured the gold in freehand, ball and individual all-around of the girls rhythmic gymnastics finals. A ballet hopeful at the Cultural Center of the Philippines since 1998, Batallones garnered 18.4 points in the freehand competition and 17.75 in the ball for a total of 36.15 in the individual all around.


BEFORE THE EJECTION

Shaquille O'Neal of Los Angeles jumps for a basket during yesterday's Laker-Jazz game in Los Angeles, with Donyell Marshall helping a teammate block the shot. The Lakers bucked O'Neal's ejection on two technicals to win, 112-82. In New York, the Orlando Magic beat the Knicks, 108-97, to earn a playoff berth. OTHER RESULTS: Toronto 84, Charlotte 80; Miami 120, Houston 117, 2OT; New Jersey 101, Washington 88; Memphis 97, Denver 86; Philadelphia 92, Milwaukee 90; Dallas 108, Portland 96; Phoenix 99, Seattle 92; Sacramento 122, Minnesota 103. AP

Olongapo co-leader in MBA

GAMES TODAY (San Fabian Gym)
6 p.m.—Cagayan vs Pangasinan
(St. La Salle Bacolod)
6 p.m.—Davao vs Negros

By Roy Luarca

THE OLONGAPO Volunteers sustained a strong start en route to a 104-82 rout of the RCPI Negros Slashers on Tuesday night, giving them a share of the lead in the Metropolitan Basketball Association First Conference at the Olongapo Convention Center.

Powered by 6-foot-8 Jeffrey Flowers, the Volunteers built up a 15-point lead in the first quarter and padded it to 27 points by the end of the third quarter to post their second straight win and catch up with the Cebuana Lhuillier Gems at the top.

Flowers, the league's leading rebounder last year, barreled his way to 30 points and pulled down 18 boards in leading the Volunteers past the Slashers, the Southern Conference champions who were clobbered off the glass, 50-35.

Another key figure in the Volunteers' surprisingly easy victory against the Southern Conference champions was Johnedel Cardel. Playing against his former teammates, Cardel supported Flowers with 17 points, three rebounds and two assists.

Volunteers coach Junel Baculi also drew double digits from Henry Fernandez with 11 even as all the players he fielded broke into the scoring column. Olongapo, finding its mark from both short range and long distance, ripped the game apart at the end of the third quarter, 76-49.

Scores:

OLONGAPO 104—Flowers 30, Cardel 17, Fernandez 11, Encarnacion 8, Robinson 7, Dualan 7, Tan 6, Patrimonio 6, Gonzales 4, Allen 4, Orfrecio 2, McCoy 2.

NEGROS 82—Francisco 17, Hugnatan 16, Madrid 11, Dela Rosa 8, Aldeguer 7, Ferriols 7, Gamboa 5, San Diego 3, Espiritu 2, Benedicto 2, Bautista 2.

Quarters: 27-12, 55-31, 76-49, 104-82.

Ateneo upsets Shark

GAMES TOMORROW (Makati)
2 p.m.—John-O Juzz vs RP Youth
4 p.m.—Ateneo vs Blu
6 p.m.—ICTSI-La Salle vs Montaña

ENRICO Villanueva starred yesterday as Ateneo-Hapee-Negros Navigation upset PBL Challenge Cup champion Shark Energy Drink, 69-65, at the Makati Coliseum.

Villanueva played almost unstoppable, unloading 31 points and grabbing 13 rebounds in steering the Blue Eagles to a three-way tie for the lead with Kutitap Toothpaste and ICTSI-La Salle with identical 2-0 cards.

"Enrico stepped up for us, he really played almost unstoppable. And he did a good job at the boards. I just hope he'll continue to play this way," said Ateneo-Hapee-Negros Navigation coach Joel Banal.

Shark was hampered by its 23 turnovers.

Scores:

ATENEO 69—Villanueva 31, Gonzales 11, Cruz 10, Bugia 8, alvarez 4, Membrere 3, Anicete 2, Domingo 0, Fonacier 0, Quimpo 0.

SHARK 65—Sotto 18, Basilides 11, Castro 9, Junio 7, Ybanez 6, Cole 4, Rodriguez 4, Caceres 3, Balares 3, Ortega 0, Galura 0.

Quarterscores: 12-18, 35-36, 52-46, 69-65.

Bulabon, pal Nestea volley beach favorites

HERE'S one piece of Nestea volley beach news that should send shivers down the other participants' spines: Kent Bulabon, the exciting defending champion Foundation University of Dumaguete, is back.

The power-hitting Bulabon has confirmed his participation in the Visayas-Mindanao eliminations of the 6th Nestea Beach Volley University Championships set April 13-15 at the sand courts of La Salle Green Hills, making Foundation University the team to beat this year.

Bulabon will join schoolmate Isidro Bongcasan, who paired with Eduard Balbuena when the other Foundation team host lost to Bulabon and Ralph Mingueto in a pulsating finals match in the island paradise of Boracay last year.

Other than Foundation, several other teams stretching as far as Tawi Tawi have confirmed their participation and the tandem of Bulabon and Bongcasan is expected to find some tough opposition against the likes of University of St. La Salle in Bacolod, University of San Carlos and Southwestern University among others in a race for two slots each in the men's and women's divisions.

Winners of the Luzon and Vis-Min eliminations will face qualifiers from Metro Manila schools in Boracay on May 11-12. At stake is P100,000 plus P50,000 worth of sports equipment for the school they represent.

The event is supported by Speedo, the official outfitter, Mikasa, WG&A Superferry, Asian spirit, Astring O Sol Ice, Carl's Jr. and Kenny Rogers as well, Boracay resorts and restaurants, Boracay Gold Crowne Club, Villa de Oro, Club 10 Beach Resort, Crystal Sand, Alyssa Resort, Club Bazurra, Summer Place, Caribo, Gorio's and Hey Jude.

Mandaluyong derby

FORTY-EIGHT fights are on tap today at Mandaluyong Coliseum in the 8th Ucap Bumble Bee Balbina/Roadmaster 7-Cock Derby. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout Shampoo of Lakpue Drug. The leaders are the entries of Pol Estrellado (PE SanPablo), lawyer Ram Lopez and Tony Litonjua (Starwars Altuz) and Sonny Lagon and Mayor Joel Brillantes (Blue Balde JBB), who posted three victories each. Derby manager Rey Lee said that Mandaluyong Coliseum strictly implements the "Bayad-Agad" format on center bets immediately after every fight.

PSC receives ₱3-M donation

BUHAIN

CHAIR Eric Buhain of the Philippine Sports Commission yesterday received a P3-million pledge from Whitehall Pharmaceutical Philippines.

The donation is aimed to boost the training preparations of national athletes for international competitions.

"I would like to express my gratitude to Whitehall Pharmaceutical for their genuine concern and support for the welfare of our athletes," Buhain said.

Whitehall manufactures Centrum multi-vitamins and Advil medicines.

Just recently, the PSC forged an agreement with Air Philippines and Philtranco that a 20 percent discount on fare will be granted to national athletes, coaches, as well as PSC employees effective April 12 until the end of this year.

"I know the sacrifices that athletes have to undergo because I was one of them and the support that these private firms are extending will go a long way," Buhain said.

Air Philippines will also promote the PSC program "Piso Para sa Atleta" by remitting to the government sports agency one peso of every ticket sold starting July 1 until the end of this year.

Nissan Exalta's ABS passes severe test

CEBU—The highly acclaimed Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS) installed in the island-hopping Nissan Exalta GS Superio passed its severe test on Tuesday when the sparkling silver sedan toured Negros and this bustling province in the fourth Pan Philippine Marathon.

After another day of driving under extreme weather conditions, the Exalta's worthiness was put in neon once again.

Said noted Boy Fuentes of the QG 1.6-liter engine speedster: "The Exalta's ABS system functioned very well. It worked well especially when we had to make sudden stops because of the road repairs as well as in cutting corners."

The Caltex Havoline odometer read 4,603 kilometers, but Fuentes noted that the Exalta "still looks sleek, neat and fine."

The Exalta GS Superio, armed with a smooth-as-silk automatic transmission, left Tampi at 7 a.m. Tuesday and arrived in Dumaguete just before lunchtime for its run in the Queen City following a brief ferry crossing to Bato.

Before arriving in downtown Cebu, the Exalta crew rekindled its love affair with the captivating towns of Negros when it passed through Bais City, Cabangcalan and Dumaguete, site of the revered Silliman University.

A highlight came when the crewmembers made their way to the new Escalante town in Negros Occidental, evoking memories about the killing of the town's male population by suspected militiamen several years back.

RACING TIPS

At San Lazaro By Mr. 999

Race 1—1. Ruby Rosa 2. Matipuno/Reign Supreme 3. Striking Abbey
Race 2—1. Bemedalled Ruler 2. Majestic Ruler 3. Power Corrupts 4. Bright Task
Race 3—1. The Mailman 2. Dragon Doding 3. King Cobra 4. Naughty
Race 4—1. Up Next 2. Material Maker
Race 5—1. Lucky Gambit 2. Search for Gold 3. Music N Song 4. Alert One
Race 6—1. Golden Prince 2. Pistol Red 3. Celebration 4. Might and Power 5. T Square 6. Star Worth/Dandansoy
Race 7—1. Time Essential 2. Ocean Dignity 3. Simply Great 4. Moving Target 5. Sexy Royal
Race 8—1. Daseldurf 2. Lorna 3. Big Bucks 3. Something Best
Race 9—1. Arigato 2. Sabik 3. Rose and Toy 4. Noble Principality 5. Ray Moon 6. Love Dolls

Sampaguita Rally set

THE SECOND staging of the "Shell-Helix Motoring Today Motor Sports Challenge-the Subic Experience" will be held on May 4. Also known as the "Sampaguita Rally," it challenges the precision driving of participants. The sponsorship agreement of Shell-Helix was signed by Edwin Laset, marketing manager of Pilipinas Shell Corp., and Ray Butch Gamboa, president of Sunshine Television Ventures, a production outfit of Motoring Today TV show. Witnesses were Allen Mojica, president and CEO of A.P. Mojica & Associates Public Relations Inc., who will handle the event management, and Jennifer Bleza, vice president for production of Sunshine Television Ventures Production.

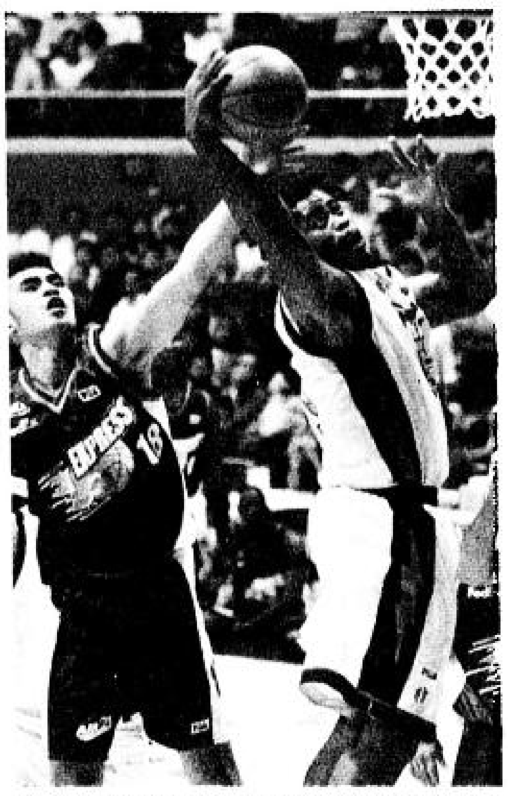
SPORTS

Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ● Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

'Big Challenge' slated

THE OPEN Asian amateur muay thai and kickboxing tournaments for men and women will start tomorrow and end on April 14 at the Robinson's Place in Manila. The event, organized by Manila Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna and the International Amateur Muay Thai Federation-Philippines, is dubbed as the "Big Challenge" and will pit fighters from Germany, Canada, Switzerland, Iran, Russia, India, Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago and the Philippines.

■ Famous Fistorama boxing program returns Sunday on RPN 9 A17
■ Ateneo upsets defending PBL champion Shark Energy Drink A17


FEDEX slotman Yancy de Ocampo (left) foils a shot by Red Bull's Julius Nwosu. FILE PHOTO

Strothers fined ₱50,000

Teams	W	L		W	L
Talk N Text	8	1	Hapee-RP	4	5
Purefoods	7	2	Alaska	4	5
Coca-Cola	7	3	San Miguel	4	5
Red Bull	5	4	Selecta-RP	3	7
FedEx	5	4	Ginebra	2	7
Sta. Lucia	5	4	Shell	1	8

GAME TODAY (Makati Coliseum)
6 p.m.—FedEx vs Hapee-RP

By June Navarro

SAN Miguel Beer imports Lamont Strothers and Mario Bennett were slapped P50,000 each as fine for their unsportsmanlike behavior during the Beermen's 73-65 loss to the Sta. Lucia Realtors on Sunday.

Strothers was also suspended one game, which will take effect on Tuesday when the Beermen face Hapee-RP Team.

"What they (Strothers and Bennett) did was conduct unbecoming a professional basketball player," said PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino yesterday after handing down the verdict.

"We would like to reiterate that actions like those have no place in this league. Not today, not ever," he said.

It was the biggest penalty slapped an individual player and the first time a cager got suspended without being involved in a fistfight.

They drew the fines and suspension after they had openly defied a referee's call with a blatant display of disrespect to game officials.

Meanwhile, FedEx tries to deliver a franchise record third straight win when the Express collide with Hapee-RP Team today in the PBA Samsung Governors Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

Buoyed by back-to-back victories over Barangay Ginebra and Purefoods, the Express are the sentimental favorites against the Nationals in the lone 6 p.m. encounter.

The Express barely survived against the Kings, 79-78, but whipped the TJ Hotdogs, 89-75, in Antipolo City last week.

At that time, Jermaine Walker gave himself a birthday present after erupting for 37 points as he led the Express to their fifth win in nine outings, good for a quarterfinal slot.

6th Nestea Beach Volley University Championships

METRO MANILA LEG
TEAM RANKING AS OF APRIL 6, 2002

Teams	PTS. WON	RTS. LOST	QUOTIENT	RANK
WOMEN'S Division				
Letran	63	24	2.6250	1
Mapua Inst. of Tech.	63	26	2.4231	2
Adamson University	63	28	2.2500	3
Saint Jude College	64	37	1.7297	4
PCU	63	37	1.7027	5
MEN'S Division				
Central Coll. of the Phils.	63	14	4.5000	1
Adamson University	63	31	2.0323	2
Rizal Tech. Univ.	63	33	1.9091	3
Letran	63	34	1.8529	4
PATTS	63	38	1.6579	5

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METRO

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

It's MMDA vs bus owners

By Alcuin Papa

DESPITE a threat from bus owners, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority is bent in reducing the number of vehicles on Edsa by lifting the exemption on buses from the color-coding scheme.

This was stressed in a press conference yesterday by MMDA chair Benjamin Abalos who said he would meet with owners of bus companies today to convince them to reduce the number of buses they field on Edsa.

"They have been exempted for so long. Why can't we lift the exemption now when the traffic is bad along Edsa?" Abalos said.

The MMDA chair explained that he came up with the plan because bus drivers continue to violate traffic rules and regulations.

Abalos pointed out that the cause of congestion along Edsa, especially during the rush hours, are buses who clog the lanes despite the rule that they can only load and unload passengers on bus stops for only 10 seconds.

With the plan, Abalos said there would be 600 buses less plying Edsa on any given day.

An estimated 3,000 buses ply Edsa daily.

The color-coding scheme, Abalos said, would also allow some of the drivers to rest.

The other day, the Integrated Metro Manila Bus Operators Association (IMBOA) threatened to raise their fares to P12 from the present P4 to offset their loss of income if the MMDA does decide to implement the color-coding scheme on buses again.

MBOA president Claire dela Fuenta had said bus companies, already reeling from the rise in the prices of gas and the spare parts, would be hit with more revenue loses.

But Abalos defended his plan, pointing out that buses plying Edsa are half-empty even during rush hours due to the operation of the Metro Rail Transit.

"By our estimate, only 15 to 20 percent of commuters still patronize public utility buses because majority of commuters are now riding the MRT," Abalos said.

Because of this, he said half-empty buses could now be taken out to lessen traffic congestion.

Sex worker caught in the act; 22 others fall in hotel raid

By Philip C. Tubeza

MANILA City Hall policemen arrested on Tuesday 23 female sex workers in a Sta. Cruz hotel after one of them was caught having sex with a police asset.

Mayor Lito Atienza said members of the Western Police District-Special Operations Group (WPD-SOG) raided the Merchant Hotel at the corner of Bernardo and Soler streets in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

He said the woman, who was "caught in the act," was 26 years old. He however declined to give further details.

Besides the 23 sex workers, three hotel staff members were also arrested.

But the raiding team failed to arrest the owner or the maintainers of the prostitution front.

Atienza said he ordered the raid after receiving reports that the massage parlor on the second floor of the hotel was being used as a prostitution den.

Senior Supt. Ernesto Ibay, WPD-SOG chief, said one of his police assets masqueraded as a customer and paid P1,000 for sex with one of the women.

The lawmen then broke into the hotel after the undercover agent gave a signal "that he was already having sex" with one of the women inside a room at the second floor.

Members of the raiding team barged into the room and indeed caught the two in a compromising position.

Other policemen searched the other rooms and found most of the sex workers in the "aquarium" or the big room with a one-way mirror, where customers could view them from outside.

Ibay said the victims would be charged with working without a permit while the woman caught having sex with the police asset would face the additional charge of prostitution.

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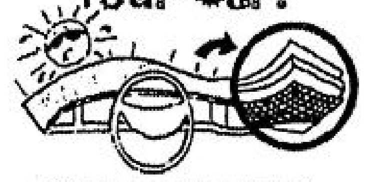

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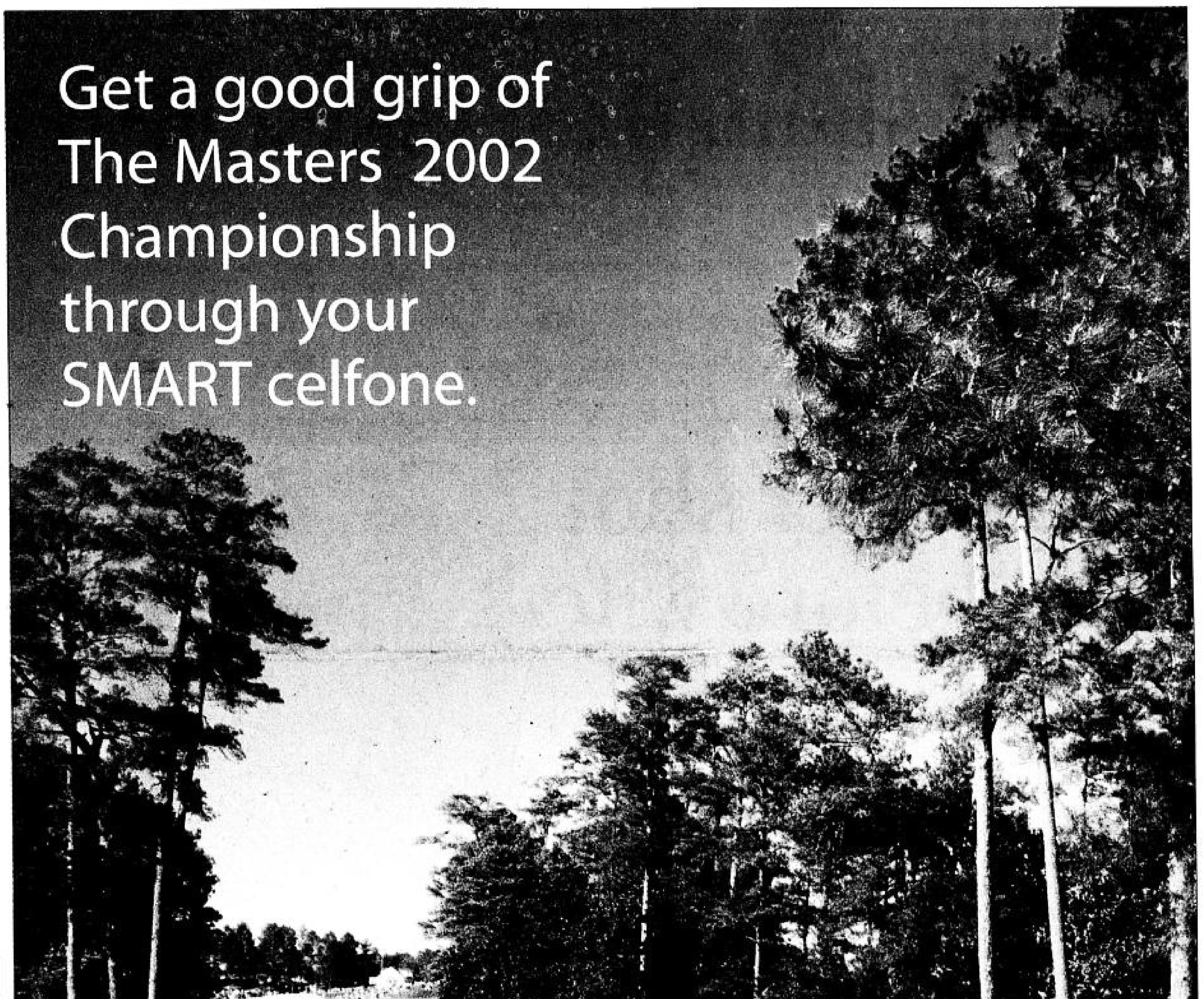

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THURSDAY APRIL 11 912-8983

Italian priest was not rescued

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE MILITARY and police say that kidnapped priest Giuseppe Pierantoni was rescued from his kidnappers in the coastal town of Tungawan, Zamboanga Sibugay province.

That report has been adopted by President Macapagal-Arroyo, commander in chief of both the military and the police. You can't blame the President because a leader has to rely on the report of her or his subordinates.

But I know for a fact that there were negotiations for the release of the kidnapped Italian priest weeks before his supposed "rescue."

***

I can't reveal the identity of my source right now, but it was he who worked for Pierantoni's release.

The source told me before the Holy Week that Pierantoni's release was already "in the bag." He said all that was needed was for him to give the kidnappers a small amount for the priest's "board and lodging."

Anyway, it's all water under the bridge now. What is important is that Pierantoni is now free.

***

The President should crack the whip to make the military and police go double time in catching the Abu Sayyaf and the Pentagon Gang which kidnapped Pierantoni.

The Abu Sayyaf is holding an American missionary couple and a Filipino nurse hostage. The group, which has been linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist network, is now the object of joint RP-US military operations in Basilan.

The Pentagon Gang, which operates in Central Mindanao, is lucky because it doesn't have the international terrorist tag that its counterpart in Basilan has.

***

Perhaps I'm a little dense but I can't understand why the government keeps pointing to the Abu Sayyaf as an international terrorist group, and therefore the object of the joint RP-US military operations, when the Abu Sayyaf is just part of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Ask any military and police commander in Mindanao. He will tell you the MILF controls the Abu Sayyaf and the Pentagon Gang! So, why does the government go for the little Indians—the Abu Sayyaf and the Pentagon— when they have already identified the Big Chief, the MILF?

***

Bin Laden's al-Qaida network gave arms and money to the MILF. This was before the US government hunted down its members as a result of the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center.

Many MILF members fought side by side with Afghan mujahideens in their war of liberation from Russia. That's why arms from Afghanistan poured into the MILF after the Russians were defeated.

The MILF became a big fighting force as a result of the material and financial help it was getting from Afghanistan.

***

The MILF disowns the Abu Sayyaf and the Pentagon Gang whenever big kidnappings take place. Disowning the Abu Sayyaf and the Pentagon is a way of deflecting pressure put to bear on it by the government.

But the truth is the Abu Sayyaf and the Pentagon are satellites of the MILF.

The government is going after the wrong targets.

***

The Abu Sayyaf of Basilan and the Pentagon are "sister" groups that operate in tandem.

Remember the attack by the Abu Sayyaf at the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan last year? Five days before, the Pentagon group attacked the Pearl Farm off Davao City.

Like the Abu Sayyaf at Dos Palmas, the Pentagon wanted to capture foreign and prominent local tourists at the Pearl Farm resort and hold them for ransom.

The attack at Pearl Farm, however, did not succeed because its guards fought back.

My sources in the military say the MILF orchestrated the attacks at Dos Palmas and Pearl Farm.

***

The Abu Sayyaf in Basilan does not have any connections with the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu which is holding journalist Arlyn de la Cruz hostage.

De la Cruz has written a heart-rending appeal to her media colleagues not to prejudge her. Some news reports have said she made up her disappearance as a publicity stunt for her coming book on the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan.

De la Cruz says she doesn't understand why some of her colleagues have a secret hatred for her.

***

Her letter to her colleagues is oozing with bitterness.

"Marami pala sa inyo ang galit sa akin, maging mga sarili kong kaibigan sa industriya, may lihim palang galit," she said.

Arlyn, the hatred is born out of jealousy. They hate your guts because they couldn't do what you did before you were captured by your kidnappers.

Some of your brothers and sisters in the profession don't like you because you scooped them left and right.

It's the Filipino's crab mentality at work, Arlyn! They're jealous of your success and they want to pull you down with them.

Guard slain, ₱2M taken near City Hall

By Philip Tubeza

AFTER shooting dead a security officer, three robbers escaped with P2 million from a money changer's car in a daring noonday heist right in front of the Manila City Hall yesterday.

RPM Money Changer security officer Dante Castro, 56, a former soldier, died due to multiple gunshot wounds in his head and body.

Driver Allan Divisoria, a companion of the slain guard, was still fighting for his life as of press time.

The 26-year-old Divisoria took four bullets in his body, said PO3 Carlos Santos of the Ermita Police Station.

Divisoria was hit in his left abdomen, left arm, left shoulder, and left foot, after the three unidentified suspects peppered their car, a Nissan Bluebird (Plate No. DJM 400), with bullets.

Kim Ayeng, 34, another RPM employee, was unscathed after the motorcycle-riding suspects grabbed the P2 million from her.

A witness described one of the gunmen as tall, of slim build, dark complexioned, and about 5-foot-6 in height.

The three robbers did not bother to put on head covers to hide their faces.

Investigators recovered nine empty shells and two slugs, believed to have come from a 9 mm pistol.

Police said the robbery happened around 12:30 p.m. yesterday at the Lagusnilad underpass in front of City Hall.

The victims had just withdrawn the money from the Metrobank branch in Binondo and were on their way back to the RPM shop at M.H. del Pilar corner P. Faura streets in Ermita when the suspects pounced on them.

The victim's car was driving out of the stiff underpass and got stuck in traffic when the suspects' motorcycle passed it by.

Two of the suspects, who had already gotten off the motorcycle, walked toward the stuck Nissan Bluebird from behind, then opened fire on Divisoria on the driver's seat and Castro, who was seated beside the driver.

The suspects then opened the car's back door and forcibly took the duffel bag containing the P2 million from Ayeng.

"I saw the two robbers running toward their waiting colleague on the motorcyle. They then quickly drove away," witness Ranilo Anis said.

"But I was not able to see them clearly because I ran to the victim's car due to the woman's shouts for help," Anis added.

Anis and other motorists brought the victims to the Manila Doctors Hospital but Castro was declared dead on arrival.

"I did not see how many gunshot wounds he (Castro) had because blood flowed out of his head," Anis said.

Rice trader shot dead before wife

By Nelson Flores

THREE men shot and killed a rice trader in front of his horrified wife and brother-in-law in their house in Antipolo City Monday evening, police reported yesterday.

Police said Jimmy Sarmiento, a resident of Sto. Nino Street, Barangay San Isidro, Antipolo City, was shot two times and was killed on the spot.

Sarmiento's wife, Editha, and his brother-in-law Mario Lico Jr., were also wounded in the attack.

Editha sustained a gunshot wound in the chest while Mario was shot in the neck. Both are now in a Quezon City hospital, police said.

Police suspected the gunmen to be members of the Akyat-Bahay gang.

Police said the victims were just coming home from work and were about to enter their house when armed men suddenly appeared and grabbed Editha's handbag, containing the day's earning of at least P300,000.

Lico, Editha and her husband tried to resist, but the suspects opened fire, took the handbag and fled on board a white taxi.

In Marikina City, a still unidentified gunman shot and killed a 28-year-old man early Monday morning.

Half an hour after he was shot, Melbert Tioco, 28, of Molave Street, Barangay Concepcion Uno, Marikina, was pronounced dead at the Amang Rodriguez Medical Center, police said.

About 2:30 a.m. in front of a small bar on Molave Street, witnesses heard the victim and his assailant arguing over something, police said.

Witnesses also told police that Tioco's companions failed to stop the gunman from fleeing after he shot the victim.

DENNIS SABANGAN

LIKE SUMMER FLIES

These tired, unwashed limbs scattered on a pavement at the corner of Edsa and Kamuning in Quezon City don't belong to victims of violent crimes, but rather to faceless poor kids whose number continues to multiply like summer flies around the metropolis—and who can't go home again.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, April 11, 2002
2nd Week of Easter

1st Reading: **Acts 5:27-33**
Gospel: **Jn 3:31-36**

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "He who comes from above is above all; he who comes from the earth belongs to the earth and his words, too, are earthly. The One who comes from heaven speaks of the things he has seen and heard; he bears witness to this but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever does receive his testimony acknowledges the truthfulness of God.

The one sent by God speaks God's words and gives the Spirit without measure. For the Father loves the Son and has entrusted everything into his hands. Whoever believes in the Son lives with eternal life, but he who will not believe in the Son will never know life and always faces the justice of God."

Commentary

During our Lenten journey, we contemplated and celebrated the saving actions of Jesus. Now in the Easter Season, John presents the teaching of Jesus to deepen our awareness of the meaning of his actions. John urges us to listen to Jesus, sent and beloved by God, speaking God's words and giving the Spirit without measure. Faith in Christ puts life on a new level, with eternal horizons. The reading from Acts gives a graphic example of what the gospel presents in abstract terms: the believing Christians are contrasted with the High Priest and Council, angry and wanting to kill them. John's message to his people is a sobering one: choose: belief or unbelief. There's nothing in between. Christ can be dismissed and the life he has to offer can be left aside, like a blind person who lives in the dark and never knows the joy of light.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: claret@cn1.net; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

LABOR LAW (TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT)—Illegal recruitment—To prove illegal recruitment, only two elements need be shown, viz., (1) the offender undertakes either any activity within the meaning of "recruitment and placement" defined under Art. 13 (b), or any of the prohibited practices enumerated under Article 34 of the Labor Code; and (2) he has no valid license or authority required by law to enable one to lawfully engage in recruitment and placement of workers. A license is a document issued by the Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) authorizing a person or entity to operate a private employment agency, while an authority is a document issued by the Dole authorizing a person or association to engage in recruitment and placement activities as a private recruitment entity. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Buena, Second Division, People v. Pascua, G.R. No. 125081, October 2, 2001]

DIGEST BY R.B. VERA

Navotas dump can't open without DENR permit

By Alcuin Papa

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority yesterday gave the assurance that the planned landfill in Navotas will not open for business without an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

But protesters have hit the DENR and called on Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez to resign for allegedly issuing a "permit" to Philippine Ecology System Corporation (Phileco), the contractor of the planned garbage disposal facility in Navotas, saying the landfill will expose residents in the area to toxic contamination.

But MMDA chair Benjamin Abalos assured that "no ECC will be issued," until the residents in the area have said their piece.

He added those opposed to the project will have a chance to air their protest over the project.

The militant fisherfolk group Pamalakaya also urged Alvarez and Navotas mayor Toby Tiangco to recall the "permit" supposedly issued to Phileco.

Agencies spoiling GMA housing program, claim Boni residents

By Alcuin Papa

RESIDENTS of Fort Bonifacio have accused the Bases Conversion Development Authority and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council of trying to spoil the housing program of President Arroyo for the former military camp.

The Makati Southside Residents, an organization of active and former military personnel in Fort Bonifacio, said there are efforts by the BCDA and HUDCC to exclude Palar Village from the 119-hectare land proclaimed by President Arroyo as the site for the socialized housing program.

Malacañang signed Executive Order No. 70 on Feb. 11 declaring the huge tract of Fort Bonifacio open for disposition to qualified residents.

The properties include the Bonifacio Housing and Information Technology (BHIT) Zone property at 35 hectares; Lupang Katuparan at 48 hectares; Pamayanang Diego Silang at 23.86 hectares; and the Philippine Centennial Village at 13.08 hectares.

Retired Army Lt. Rodolfo Romero, the group's president, said the Palar area was deliberately excluded by the BCDA and HUDCC during the recent hearings initiated by two government agencies.

The Palar area, located within the BHIT zone, is home to around 7,000 families.

"If this will not be included in the declared areas, thousands of families will be displaced," Romero said.

"We have secured a copy of the map for the final ground survey and we found out that Palar Village has been blotted out from the coverage of the site intended for housing projects. If this plan pushes through, around 7,000 informal families will be forced to vacate their homes through a series of forcible evictions and demolitions," Romero added.

The group, in opposing the survey, added "there will be bloodshed in Fort Bonifacio "if BCDA and HUDCC, and pro-BCDA officials of Barangay Southside led by chair Juanito dela cruz, insist on abandoning Palar Village from the coverage of the survey."

Officials of various residents associations in Fort Bonifacio have called for the suspension of the ground survey on the areas covering a total of 119 hectares, citing "flaws" in the proposal.

Palar was the recent site of bloody shootout between BCDA's security forces and armed residents, resulting in serious injuries to two persons. Romero's group, whose members were among the thousands of residents displaced by the sale of Fort Bonifacio during the term of President Arroyo, has been contesting their eviction from the area.

Funds lack impedes anti-piracy drive

By Jerome Aning

THE HEAD of the Videogram Regulatory Board yesterday blamed the poor enforcement of anti-piracy law in the country on lack of funds.

In a forum on intellectual rights held at the National Bureau of Investigation, VRB chair Lualhati Buenafe said problem on funds impeded the effective implementation of Intellectual Property Rights Law against pirates of movies and music.

"The VRB does not have any intelligence funds, we cannot buy information regarding the location of illegal replicating machines," Buenafe said during a meeting with NBI director Reynaldo Wycoco.

The VRB chief said the agency also lacks the necessary manpower to monitor the illegal activities of these pirates.

Maximo Ocampo, a detective from a private security agency who participated in the forum, cited another problem in enforcing the IPR law: the lack of government agencies and courts dealing with IPR in the provinces like Cebu and Davao.

Wycoco said piracy in many forms is a very serious problem in the country since the Philippines is already included in the international piracy watch list.

Bringing God to every cop

By Andrea Trinidad-Echavez, *Contributor*

TIME and again, ranking officials of the Philippine National Police have tried to turn the institution into a "professional, dynamic and highly motivated force," but they always wind up with "very minimal results."

Recently, four junior officers have taken up the challenge, and they are trying out a different approach—to effect a moral recovery program centered on the spirituality of every policeman.

"Unless each member experiences a personal change, then the organization will hardly change at all," one of the young officers said.

Chief Inspectors Cesar Binag, Lyndon Cubos, Ma. O. Aplasca and Benigno Durana, established the Christian Officers Reform of the Police Service (Corps) Movement Foundation, an interdenominational organization, to bring "God into every cop."

"We are probably the most maligned sector, but we cannot blame the people because their perception comes from what they hear or read in the media," said Binag, an administrative officer of the Directorate for Comptrollership.

This kind of negative perception, Binag said, has been hammered in the minds of the people that it has dragged down the PNP as an institution.

'The rotten few'

For many years, the PNP's trust rating lagged in the polls despite efforts to bring about moral recovery in the institution. Most officials simply blame it on the "few rotten ones" in the hierarchy.

To be sure, there had been efforts to cleanse the ranks of the PNP. In 1993, some 40 officials— superintendents and deputy directors included—were forced to resign as part of the so-called moral recovery program of the Ramos administration.

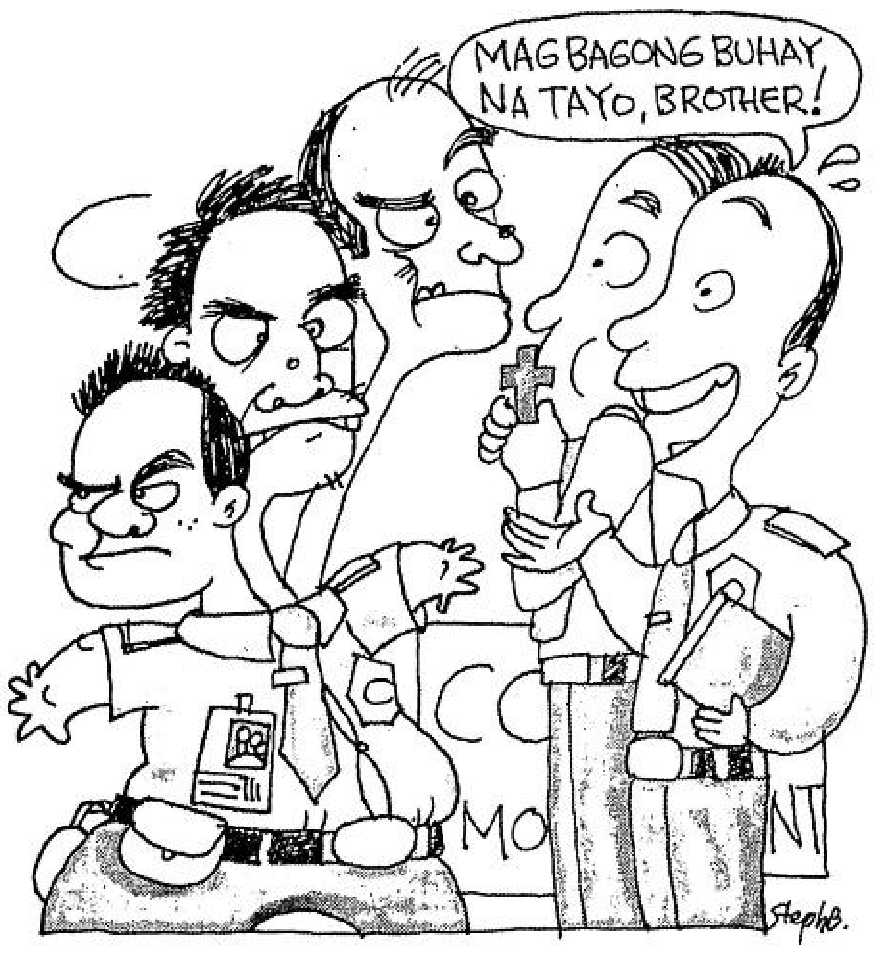
But the purges did not prove to be a lasting solution to the problem, according to the junior officers.

The four policemen believe that the only way to bring about change in the PNP is by introducing Christ into the lives of each policeman.

"Unless Jesus is in the heart of every cop, no real change can take place in the PNP," Binag said as he explained their group's somewhat radical strategy.

Binag, Cubos, Aplasca and Durana, who come from different Christian sects, believe that the real test is one of "moral will and faith," and that in order for genuine reform to take place in the PNP, "Divine Intervention" is needed.

The group devoted long hours to come up with a strategy. They counseled each other and prayed for God's hand to be upon the PNP.


MAG BAGONG BUHAY NA TAYO, BROTHER!
CO
MO
NT
StephB.

Answered prayers

Two years later, God answered their prayers. The group met a Christian missionary, Bro. Boi Manuel from Cadence International, who helped them start a formal organization. Manuel later became the group's spiritual adviser.

Through Bible studies, fellowships and prayers, they are slowly realizing their goal—that of bringing junior officers into the fold of Jesus Christ.

In 1996, more Christian officers joined the group and reached out to different areas of the PNP. Bible studies in different offices in Camp Crame became a regular weekly undertaking of the group.

Although the swell in the membership to the Corps Movement has not proven to be dramatic, the group is slowly gaining the support of the PNP leadership.

In fact, a group undertaking—the millennium program, a feedback mechanism on the public's response to PNP programs—was adopted by the PNP, making it a major program.

"We are not really after the numbers," Binag said, referring to membership in the movement. "We already feel good enough, knowing that we planted the seed (of faith) in the hearts of as many cops as we can, introducing Christ to them."

The group has worked on two major projects—My Brother's Keeper (MBK) program, which focuses on the plebes of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA), and Bless Our Cops (BOC) program, which is meant to reach out to those who are already in the active service.

A God-centered force

Since the MBK program started in 1999, the Corps Movement had already commissioned 120 PNPA graduates, all of them now in active service all over the country.

"The rationale behind our programs is that the torch of leadership will soon be passed on to the next generation, that is, the present crop of junior officers," Binag said.

To make their programs more effective, Corps Movement members are encouraged to involve their own families in the activities.

To fast-track the group's effort to achieve a God-centered, service-oriented and family-based police force, the group decided to focus on leaders and officers who are capable of influencing the organization.

Corps Movement members admitted that with the challenges and temptations they face in their tour of duty, their "spiritual battlefield" has been fierce.

"We are not holier than any other police officer," Binag said. "In fact, we are just like other any ordinary policeman, and that is why we need to counsel each other, pray for each other and help each other to rise up each time we fall."

In good company

But the good thing about being in a company of fellow Christians, he said, is that as they struggle together, they derive strength from each other.

"No one can counsel a cop better than a fellow cop," Binag said. "We understand the culture, the language and how a policeman thinks."

As part of their effort to reach out to the PNP ranks, the group produced an album last December entitled "God Bless Our Cops."

The musical, which contained all original compositions mostly written by Pastor Joseph Jusayan, was produced by Corps members themselves, along with their families.

At present, the group is in the process of constructing a web-site where cops all over the country can access and seek counseling.

"God is the pillar of this movement; without Him, we would not be where we are now and we could not have achieved what we have so far achieved," Binag said.

Jobless grads storm Makati

FRESH graduates of Information Technology schools who are now jobless and members of the group Union for Fresh Leadership (U-lead) stormed the "business center of the Philippines" yesterday and staged a protest in front of Enterprise II Building on Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.

The jobless graduates were demanding employment when they marched from Dela Rosa to Paseo de Roxas, and massed in front of the Enterprise II Building where the Microsoft office is located.

According to Baao Municipal Councilor and U-lead spokesperson Joel Badong, the protesters chose to hold a rally in the heart of the Makati business district to dramatize the plight of the jobless graduates and to appeal to the business community for employment.

"(Information Technology) schools have mushroomed around the country by the hundreds, producing thousands of IT graduates who are now unemployed despite intense education and training," Badong said.

Last week, the group also held rallies at the offices of the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) and the Department of Labor and Employment.

U-lead demanded CHEd to regulate and standardize the curriculum of IT schools because, according to the IT graduates, the programs they have learned are now obsolete, what with the fast-paced development in computer technology.

Badong also called on the business community to join them in pushing for better quality IT education because it will, in the end, be the business sector that will employ these professionals..

Seraphim concert

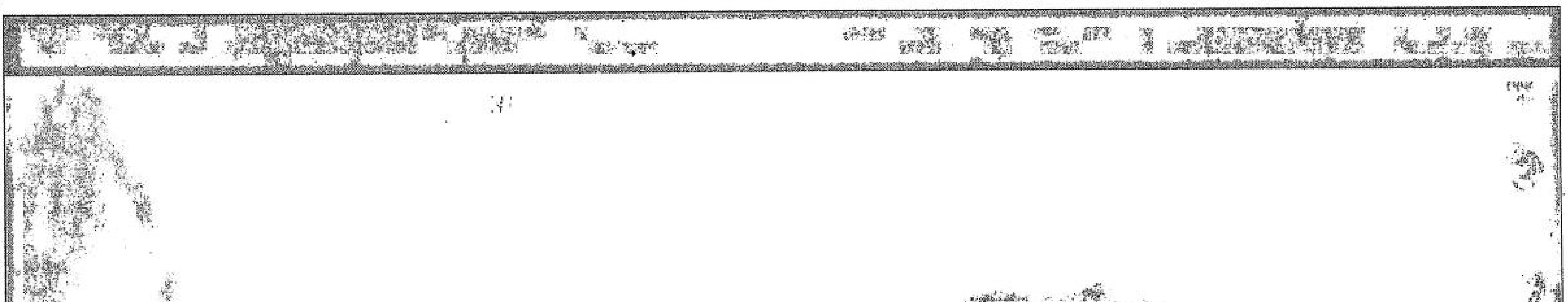
METRO Manila music lovers are expected to trek to Lipa City for the all-male chorale concert "The Seraphim at 8" on April 19 at the CAP Development Center on Ayala Highway.

The concert, to be presented by the Our Lady of Peace Parish of Barangay Lodlod, Lipa City, will have Carol Banawa as special guest.

Fr. Bong Panganiban is music director, with Nonong Palmares assisting.

The Our Lady of Peace Parish Choir will also be featured.

Proceeds from the fund-raising concert will be used to buy a new parish organ. For details, please call Nick Pamplona at (0919) 879-7008 or (043) 756-1697.

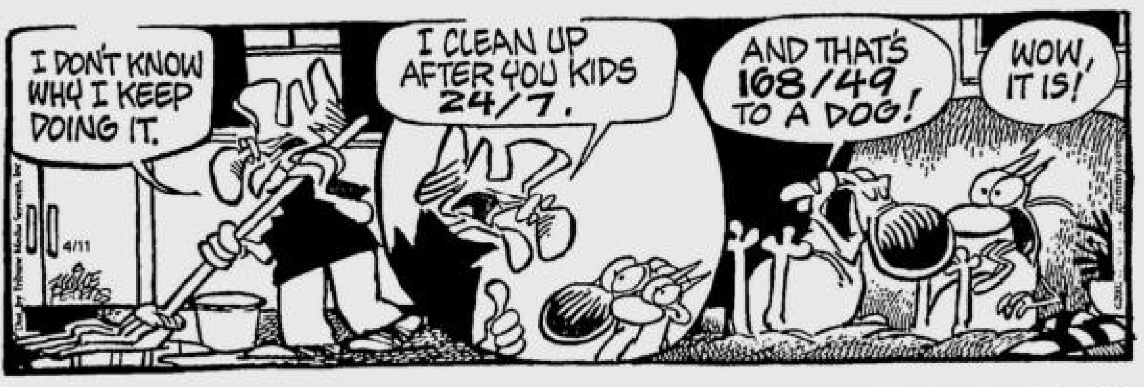

Recline. Relax. And read about life's ups and downs.

We've got everything on the changing economy, labor forces and market issues.
Not to mention most of the country's businessmen who listen to what we have to say.

BUSINESS INQUIRER

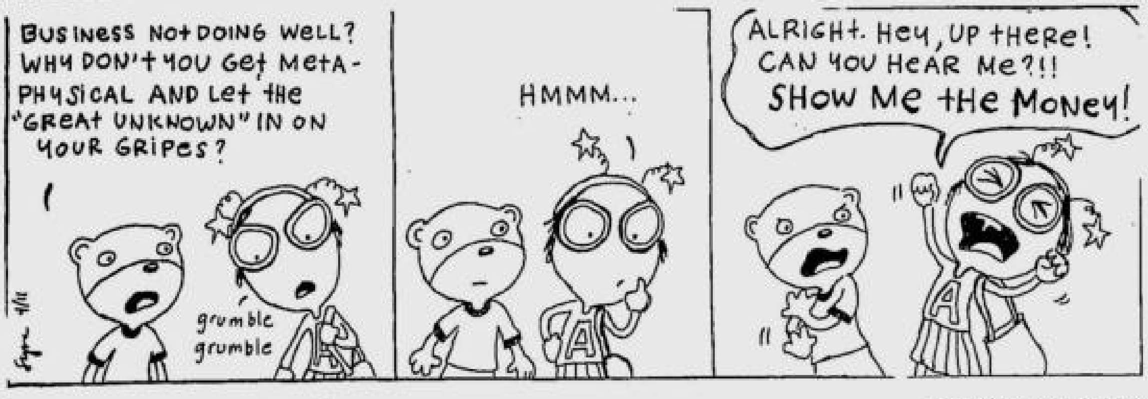
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


I DON'T KNOW WHY I KEEP DOING IT.
I CLEAN UP AFTER YOU KIDS 24/7.
AND THAT'S 168/49 TO A DOG!
WOW, IT IS!
4/11

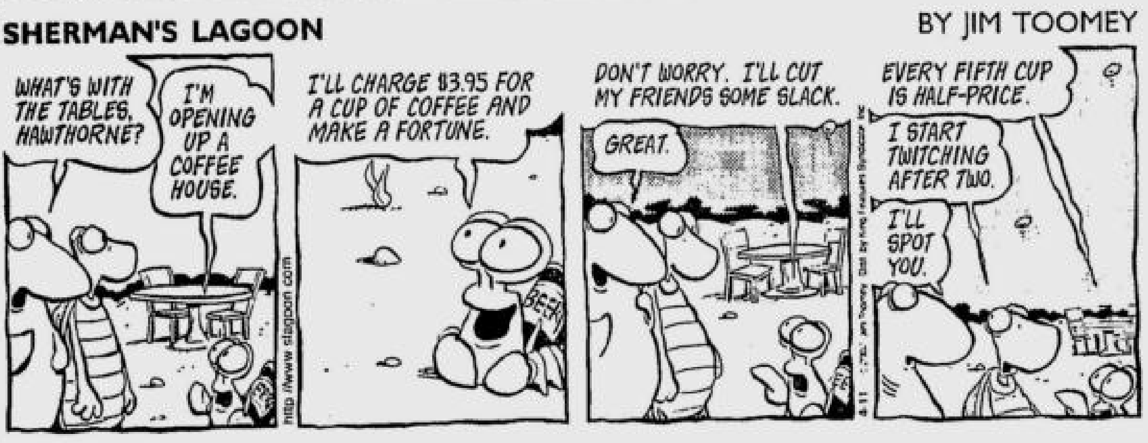
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


BUSINESS NOT DOING WELL? WHY DON'T YOU GET META-PHYSICAL AND LET THE "GREAT UNKNOWN" IN ON YOUR GRIPES?
grumble grumble
HMMM...
ALRIGHT. HEY, UP THERE! CAN YOU HEAR ME?!! SHOW ME THE MONEY!

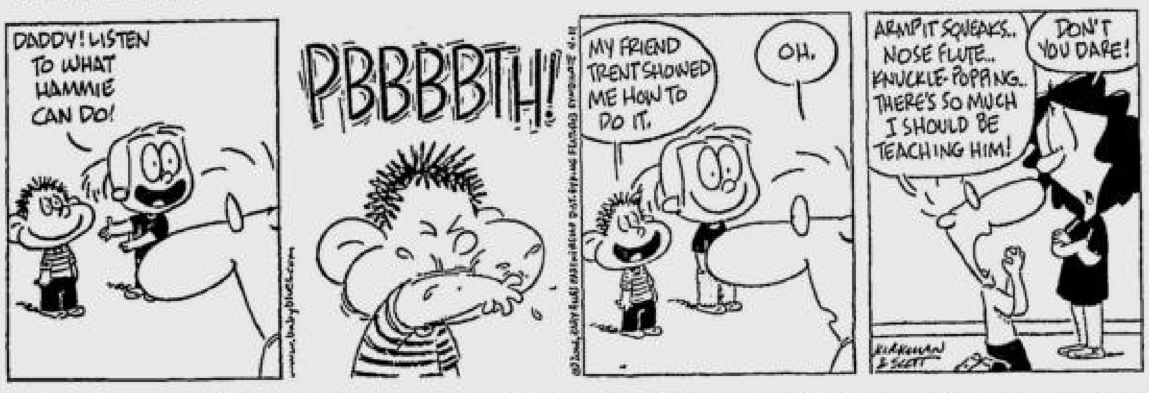
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


WHAT'S WITH THE TABLES, HAWTHORNE?
I'M OPENING UP A COFFEE HOUSE.
I'LL CHARGE $3.95 FOR A CUP OF COFFEE AND MAKE A FORTUNE.
DON'T WORRY. I'LL CUT MY FRIENDS SOME SLACK.
GREAT.
EVERY FIFTH CUP IS HALF-PRICE.
I START TWITCHING AFTER TWO.
I'LL SPOT YOU.
http://www.slagoon.com

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DADDY! LISTEN TO WHAT HAMMIE CAN DO!
PBBBBTH!
MY FRIEND TRENT SHOWED ME HOW TO DO IT.
OH.
ARMPIT SQUEAKS.. NOSE FLUTE... KNUCKLE-POPPING.. THERE'S SO MUCH I SHOULD BE TEACHING HIM!
DON'T YOU DARE!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Joel Grey, Ethel Kennedy, Peter Riegert, Louise Lasser

Happy Birthday: Expect your creative abilities to surface; you will be in the mood for love and romance. You will easily win the hearts of those you encounter. You will actively pursue pleasure and go after romantic encounters with your current partner or someone new. You would be wise to pass on financial risk offered. Your numbers are 12, 18, 21, 33, 36, 49

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Stay calm and do your best but ignore anyone who tries to put you down. You will have great ideas today so don't second-guess yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Dealing with institutions or government agencies, or other people for that matter, will be annoying. You are better off to do your own thing and avoid discord.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You can be the life of the party if you use your quick wit and intellect to dazzle those you meet at social events or meetings. Put your money in a safe place so.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You may find your position a little daunting today. Don't make decisions that could be difficult to reverse. You may not be thinking too clearly when it comes to matters of a personal nature.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Travel for business or pleasure and you will make the connections required to get ahead. You will encounter interesting individuals who will help to inspire future adventures.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't let others cost you money. Contributing to someone else's cause will not sort out your own problems. Purchases made today will not be satisfactory.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): New and exciting relationships can develop if you get out and take part in events that are of interest to you. Your intellect will bring you attention.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Your mind will be on professional concerns. Progress can be made financially if you are determined to get others to listen to your ideas. Your reluctance to admit defeat will bring you the success you're looking for.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You'll be ready for anything that comes your way today. Get involved in physical activities with friends and you will be sure to have a blast. You can learn a lot about yourself in a competitive situation.

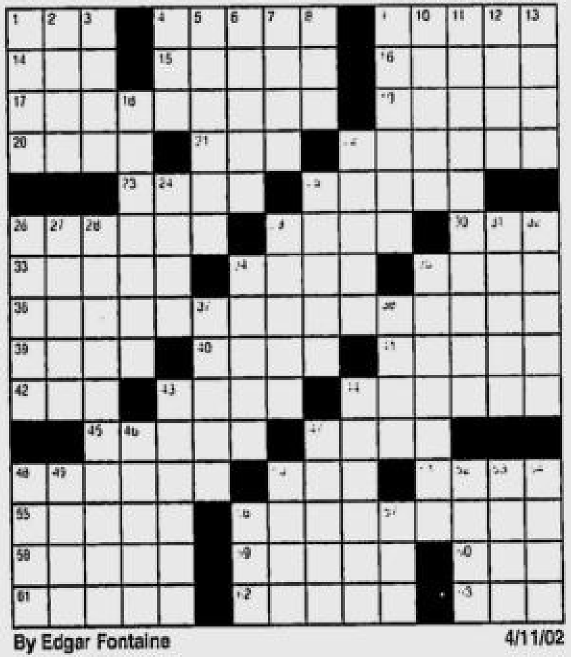
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You may have some difficulties at home today. You must not let your emotions interfere with your professional integrity. Someone you care about may let you down. You must do what's best for you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Friends and colleagues will stand behind you today. Your ability to share your ideas and to creatively help others develop their own ideas will result in popularity and support.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You can make money today and you will have the added energy to far exceed everyone's expectations. Give advice, not cash, when asked, and you'll feel much better at the end of the day.

Birthday Baby: Your ideas will always be practical and well thought out. You will plan everything carefully and leave no room for error. You will be critical of the ones you love, especially with your siblings and close friends.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Edgar Fontaine
Dighton, MA

4/11/02

ACROSS
1 Night flyer
4 Before, before
9 Assassinated Israeli P.M.
14 Period
15 Exhorted
16 Wear away
17 1989, '90 and '96 Masters champion
19 Edible root
20 "Little Man __"
21 Recent prefix
22 Filled in
23 Wild oxen
25 Spindrift
26 Organic compounds
29 __ corner
30 Black shade
33 Move smoothly
34 British gun
35 Actress Spelling
36 Masters course
39 Profound
40 Narrow margin
41 Invitee
42 Lat. or Lith., once
43 1988 champion Sandy
44 Hold your __!
45 Wallops
47 Persian fairy
48 Comic Plaza resident
50 Little legume
51 Gulp
55 City on the Rhone
56 1987 champion
58 Rock shelf
59 Discernment
60 Quayle or Forsman
61 Curvy letters
62 Frock or gown
63 Before, before

DOWN
1 Grass for greens
2 Operatic song
3 Diplomacy
4 __ Wiedersehen!
5 Nobilo and Beard
6 Eyes lasciviously
7 Make over
8 Tokyo, formerly
9 Come back
10 Antilles island
11 Co-founder of the Masters
12 __ fixe (obsession)
13 Dweeb
18 Excited
22 Dog-tired
24 Bellicose deity
25 Slander
26 Zounds!
27 Turns on a pivot
28 Youngest Masters champion
29 Four-time champion Palmer
31 Rub out
32 Pinball infractions
34 False gods
35 Travel industry
37 Aromatic herb
38 Borodin's prince
43 Young girls
44 Major suit
46 Flexible joint
47 As such
48 French she
49 Caustic substances
50 Host before Carson
52 Broad
53 Star in Bootes
54 1935 champion Sarazen
56 Inc. in Islington
57 Affirmative response

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

D	I	T	■	V	A	S	E	S	■	S	T	U	N	T
E	R	R	■	E	N	E	R	O	■	H	O	N	O	R
A	M	I	■	S	I	N	G	L	E	E	N	T	R	Y
R	A	B	A	T	■	T	O	O	K	■	A	I	M	S
■	■	■	B	A	R	I	■	N	O	B	L	E	S	T
D	O	U	B	L	E	E	A	G	L	E	■	■	■	■
E	S	S	E	■	O	N	E	■	A	G	H	A	S	T
B	L	E	S	T	■	T	S	P	■	S	O	M	M	E
T	O	S	S	U	P	■	O	E	D	■	O	M	E	N
■	■	■	■	T	R	I	P	L	E	C	R	O	W	N
A	T	L	A	S	E	S	■	V	E	R	A	■	■	■
P	R	E	Y	■	S	O	L	I	■	E	Y	D	I	E
H	O	M	E	R	A	L	A	S	K	A	■	A	R	T
I	V	O	R	Y	■	D	R	E	A	M	■	T	I	C
D	E	N	S	E	■	E	A	S	T	S	■	A	S	H

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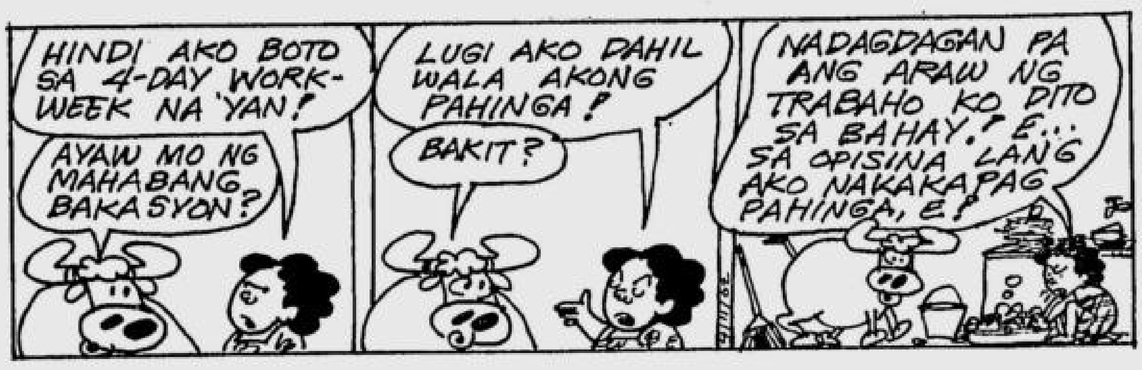
4/11/02

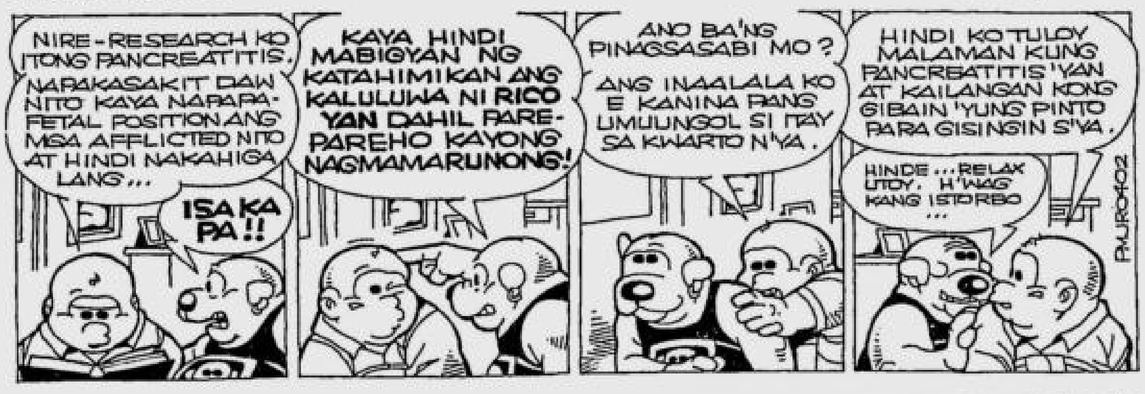
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HINDI AKO BOTO SA 4-DAY WORK-WEEK NA 'YAN!
AYAW MO NG MAHABANG BAKASYON?
LUGI AKO DAHIL WALA AKONG PAHINGA!
BAKIT?
NADAGDAGAN PA ANG ARAW NG TRABAHO KO DITO SA BAHAY! E... SA OPISINA LANG AKO NAKAKAPAG PAHINGA, E!

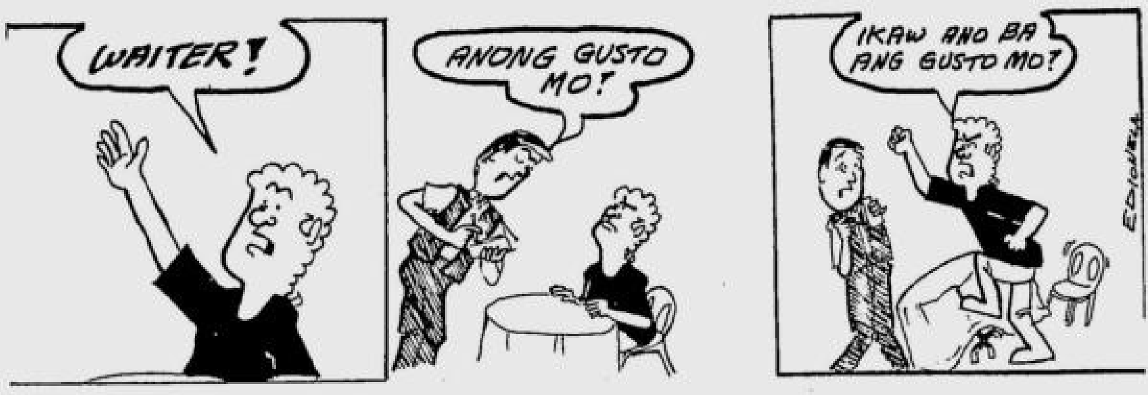
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NIRE-RESEARCH KO ITONG PANCREATITIS. NAPAKASAKIT DAW NITO KAYA NAPAPA-FETAL POSITION ANG MGA AFFLICTED NITO AT HINDI NAKAHIGA LANG...
ISA KA PA!!
KAYA HINDI MABIGYAN NG KATAHIMIKAN ANG KALULUWA NI RICO YAN DAHIL PARE-PAREHO KAYONG NAGMAMARUNONG!
ANO BA'NG PINAGSASABI MO?
ANG INAALALA KO E KANINA PANG UMUUNGOL SI ITAY SA KWARTO N'YA.
HINDI KO TULOY MALAMAN KUNG PANCREATITIS 'YAN AT KAILANGAN KONG GIBAIN 'YUNG PINTO PARA GISINGIN S'YA.
HINDE... RELAX UTOY. H'WAG KANG ISTORBO ...
PMJR0402

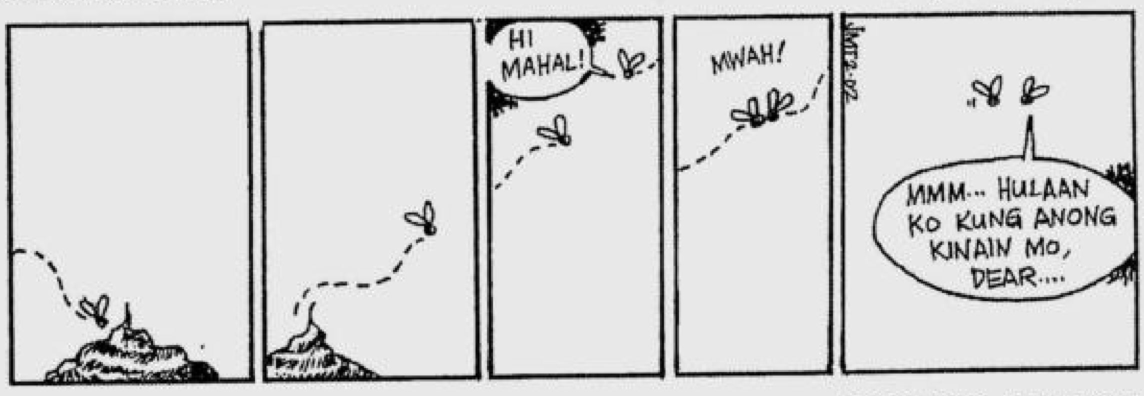
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


WAITER!
ANONG GUSTO MO?
IKAW ANO BA ANG GUSTO MO?
EDIONELA

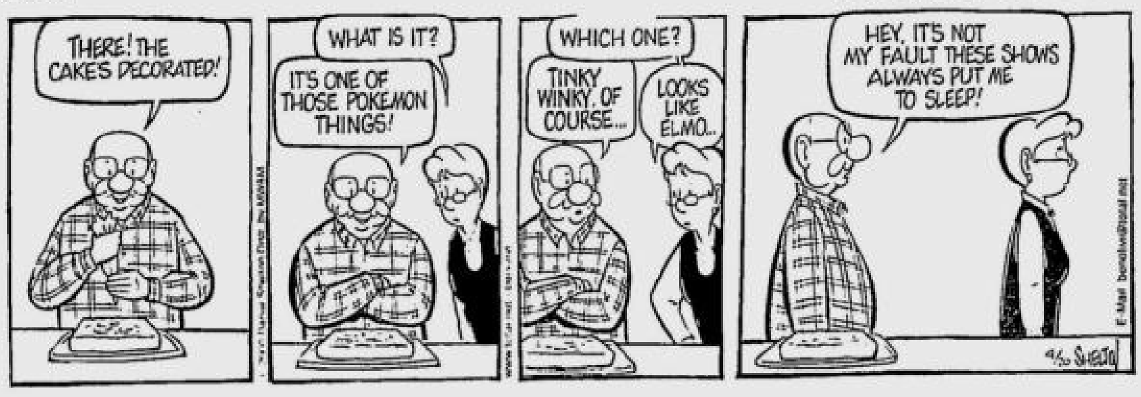
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


HI MAHAL!
MWAH!
MMM... HULAAN KO KUNG ANONG KINAIN MO, DEAR....

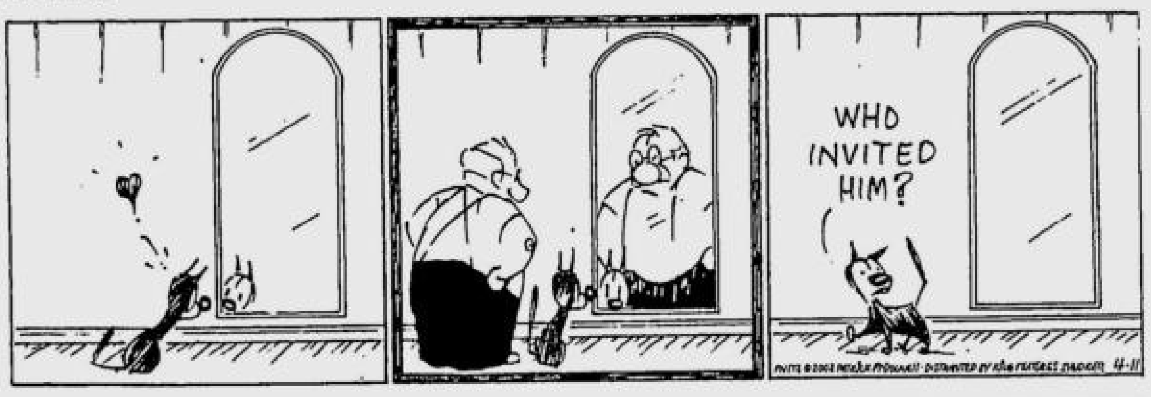
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


THERE! THE CAKE'S DECORATED!
WHAT IS IT?
IT'S ONE OF THOSE POKEMON THINGS!
WHICH ONE?
TINKY WINKY, OF COURSE...
LOOKS LIKE ELMO...
HEY, IT'S NOT MY FAULT THESE SHOWS ALWAYS PUT ME TO SLEEP!

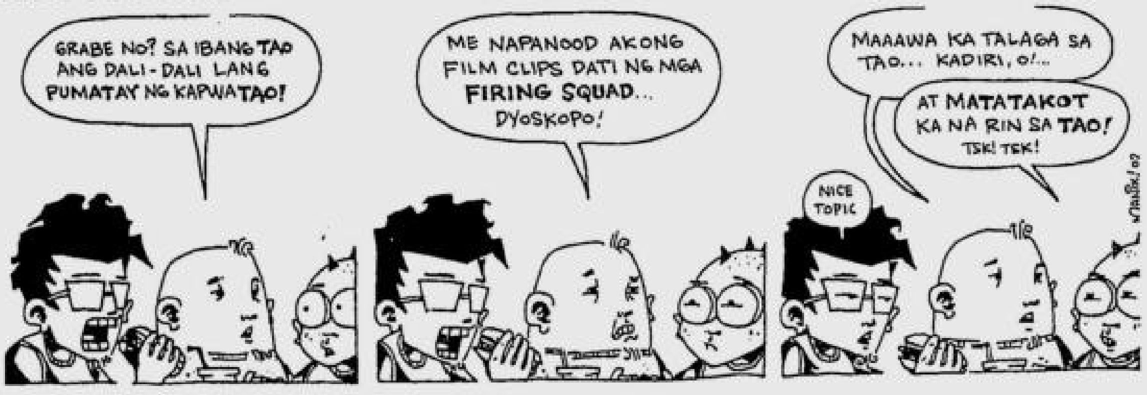
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHO INVITED HIM?
4-11

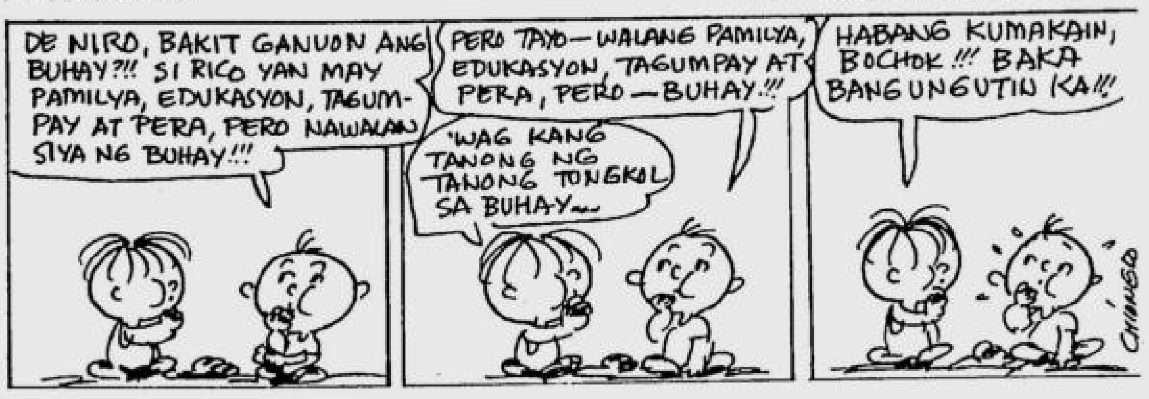
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


GRABE NO? SA IBANG TAO ANG DALI-DALI LANG PUMATAY NG KAPWA TAO!
ME NAPANOOD AKONG FILM CLIPS DATI NG MGA FIRING SQUAD... DYOSKOPO!
MAAAWA KA TALAGA SA TAO... KADIRI, O!..
AT MATATAKOT KA NA RIN SA TAO! TSK! TSK!
NICE TOPIC

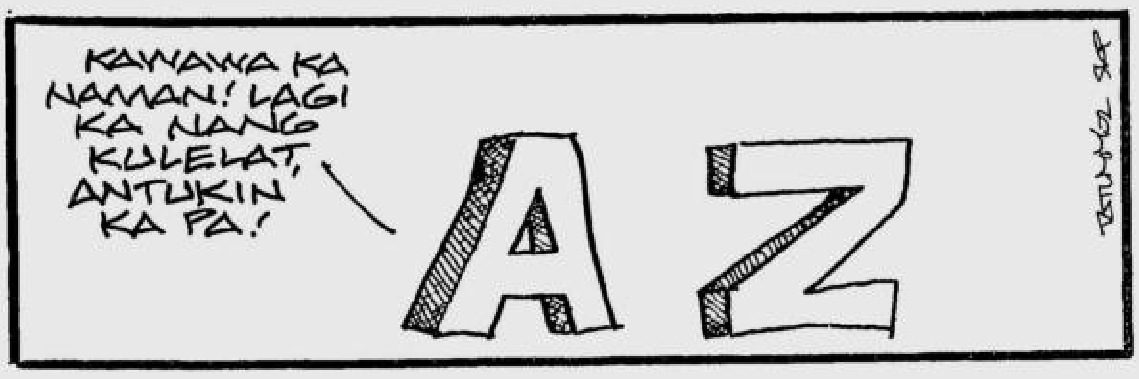
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DE NIRO, BAKIT GANUON ANG BUHAY?!! SI RICO YAN MAY PAMILYA, EDUKASYON, TAGUMPAY AT PERA, PERO NAWALAN SIYA NG BUHAY!!!
PERO TAYO—WALANG PAMILYA, EDUKASYON, TAGUMPAY AT PERA, PERO—BUHAY!!!
'WAG KANG TANONG NG TANONG TUNGKOL SA BUHAY...
HABANG KUMAKAIN, BOCHOK!!! BAKA BANGUNGUTIN KA!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


KAWAWA KA NAMAN! LAGI KA NANG KULELAT, ANTUKIN KA PA!
A
Z

GMA 7 vows to be the leading TV network this year

By Leah Salterio

EXPECT GMA 7 to be more competitive this year, as the network vows to eclipse the success of its rival station in all aspects. Whether in programming, marketing or human resource and talent development, GMA 7 swears to be more aggressive under a triumvirate of new leaders who are out to steer the network to the number one position.

New GMA 7 president is Felipe L. Gozon, who took over from Menardo Jimenez in October 2000.

"When I came in, they were content with being Number 2," Gozon says. "My goal is to make them regain the Number 1 position."

Before he became president, Gozon served as chair of the network since 1976. Today, he oversees every detail of management and production and even sits in the weekly production meeting.

"I hear out the views of everybody, except the inanities," Gozon says. "We evaluate everything — the research concepts, profile of viewers, ratings, schedules and surveys."

Powerhouse cast

Gozon initiated the trend-setting GMA 7 soaps like "Ikaw Lang ang Mamahalin," "Sana Ikaw na Nga" and "Kung Mawawala Ka," all produced with a whopping budget and powerhouse cast.

"I don't believe in counter-programming," Gozon says. "It means throwing the towel even before you fight. So we junked the (Japanese) animé programs in favor of soaps to meet the competition head-on."

So far, the network has been successful in its primetime block with the soap series. Thalia is even making a return to local TV when GMA 7 starts airing "Mari Mar" again. And with "Monica Brava" also on the primetime schedule, that makes five soaps nightly on the network.

"We found out there were viewers who didn't exactly know how the story of 'Mari Mar' started," Gozon explains. "We are bringing back the series for its avid followers."

Gozon also introduced the airing of Hollywood films dubbed in Tagalog, which started with "An Eye for an Eye," featuring the voice of Gina Alajar for Sally Fields.

Last Monday, GMA 7 aired a dramatic tearjerker, Losing Isaiah," with Oscar winners Jessica Lange and Halle Berry.

"It was done before on the big screen, but only with Tagalog subtitles," Gozon says. "This time, we really go the extra mile to translate the script and get very good dubbers."

Even the comedy programs like "Beh Bote Nga," "Kool Ka Lang," "Idol Ko si Kap" and "Bubble Gang," have been giving the rival station a run for its ratings, advertising millions and share of viewers.

At the helm of the programming department is Jimmy Duavit, eldest son of Gilberto M. Duavit, who is one of the majority stockholders of GMA 7.

Jimmy was one of the producers behind GMA Films (with Butch Jimenez), which churned out critically acclaimed box-office hits like "Jose Rizal," "Muro-Ami" and "Deathrow." Lately, however, Jimmy has decided to concentrate on TV work.

GMA 7's triumvirate of new leaders -- president Felipe L. Gozon, executive vice president Jimmy R. Duavit and marketing president Manuel Quiogue.

Mobilization

"We are working on the mobilization of dramas, soaps and even talent development," Duavit allows. "We have been fleshing out human resource development and administration. That's one way to compete."

Gozon informs the network has even allowed a specific training budget for its manpower.

"When the troops are ready, then you can acquire the bullets," he says. "We want to develop people who can write scripts and even talents who will be the stars of the future."

The network is also out to strengthen its marketing group with new head Manuel Quiogue, who brings with him his expertise from the advertising world. Quiogue was the president of J. Walter Thompson and also became vice president for sales and marketing of ABS-CBN.

When Quiogue moved to GMA 7, however, there were speculations that he was going to bring in his own staff. But the new marketing boss pointed out he is not out to displace anyone.

"Even if I bring in new people, I'd like to assure them that no one is going to be displaced," Quiogue says. "When I came in, the reception was not cold but I guess the staff had this wait-and-see attitude.

"In due time, they will see that this guy is not an ogre and he is fair, so you will also win them over."

Infrastructure

GMA 7 is not about to overlook its infrastructure, which is likewise getting a huge improvement in the coming months.

"We are creating the necessary support foundation for a more aggressive content delivery," Duavit grants. "Over the last year, we have been building and reinforcing the foundation."

Even in its signal, GMA 7 assures the viewers of a clearer reception both in Manila and the provinces.

"We are developing and adjusting our signal," says Gozon. "We have hired three teams which do nothing but find out the power on the ground. Our areas of focus are on the regional stations in Cebu, Davao, Iloilo, Dagupan, because they are capable of producing local programs."

By next month, GMA 7 will shift to a digital uplink for a significant signal improvement.

"We will do away with analog technology and enjoy encrypted signal which cannot be aired anywhere else, like what's happening now in Indonesia, Guam or even in the US," Duavit explains.

Realizing its strength in the news and public affairs department, GMA 7 is even reinforcing the dynamism of its news team.

"The growth of sales in news and public affairs have outstripped the growth in entertainment," Gozon says. "Even advertisers have come to accept the strength of our news and public affairs.

"The other network simply copies what we do. When we did our newscast in Tagalog, they also shifted to Tagalog. When our anchors stood up to deliver the news, they did the same."

But all these will not be possible if GMA 7 will not invest in modern technology and that's what the network is out to flaunt this year. A large chunk of the 2002 budget will be apportioned to a full-steam computerization of the financial systems on top of the digital signal encryption.

GMA 7 will also adopt the Oracle report "which will allow us to take cognizance of the ratings system for program analysis and thus move to a certain level of sophistication," says Gozon.

With all the changes in the network, it only means a dauntless battle ahead for GMA 7. And there's no turning back.

TRUE FAITH

Country Waffles bares April musical gigs

SHOWS

COUNTRY Waffles, the California-based restaurant chain specializing in old fashioned waffles, bares its nightly musical gigs for the month April.

In Libis, "Jammin' at Country Waffles" spices up Eastwood City Walk's live entertainment circuit with a stellar line up of today's hot and up-coming live bands.

The musical extravaganza features the Soulful Mood Strings on Wednesdays, Salt and Pepper band on Thursdays, Easter Mellow on Fridays and Caramel Park on Saturdays.

At its Rockwell branch, "By Request" April edition features the Pearl Duo on April 19 and 26. Noted pianist Romy Posadas performs on Saturdays.

Shows start 9 p.m. For details, call 421-3331 to 36 (Libis) or 898-0304/05/08/09 (Rockwell).

Virgin Café

TRUE Faith goes acoustic on Saturday at Virgin Café in Tomas Morato.

The band will perform their hits like "Kung Okay Lang Sa 'Yo," "Perfect," "Wag na Lang Kaya" and a lot more tunes.

For reservations, call 926-7379.

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Hi 6°C Lo 2°C
Heavy rains will escalate into a super storm causing huge waves-- threatening fishing boats, fishing villages and nearby areas.
THE PERFECT STORM
Premieres April on HBO
Experience it on SKYCable and Home Cable where there's always a downpour of action-adventure films.
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SM CINEMA

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SM CITY BACOOR
4173868

1	TIME MACHINE
2	ICE AGE
3	SHOWTIME
4	BLADE 2
5	HART'S WAR
6	S2PUID LUV
7	E.T.
8	BLOW DRY

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416

1	S2PID LUV
2	SHOWTIME
3	HART'S WAR
4	BLOW DRY
5	BLADE 2
6	HARI NG SELDA
7	E.T.
8	ICE AGE
9	MIMIC 2
10	MONTE CRISTO

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	E.T.
2	MONTE CRISTO
3	SHOWTIME
4	HART'S WAR
5	BLOW DRY
6	S2PID LUV
7	ICE AGE
8	BLADE 2
9	HARI NG SELDA
10	TIME MACHINE
11	GOT 2 BELIEVE
12	CROSSROADS

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	SHOWTIME
2	ICE AGE
3	BLOW DRY
4	HART'S WAR
5	MONTE CRISTO
6	E.T.
7	MIMIC 2
8	GOT 2 BELIEVE
9	S2PID LUV
10	CROSSROADS
11	TIME MACHINE
12	BLADE 2

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	MONTE CRISTO
2	SHOWTIME
3	HART'S WAR
4	BLADE 2
5	BLOW DRY
6	MIMIC 2
7	GOT 2 BELIEVE
8	ICE AGE
9	S2PID LUV
10	MONTE CRISTO
11	TIME MACHINE
12	E.T.

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	ICE AGE
2	BLADE 2
3	S2PID LUV
4	E.T.
5	MONTE CRISTO
6	HART'S WAR
7	SHOWTIME
8	MIMIC 2
9	CLOSED
10	CLOSED
11	CLOSED
12	CLOSED

SM SOUTHMALL
8069888

1	BLOW DRY
2	ICE AGE
3	HARTS WAR
4	SHOWTIME
5	MONTE CRISTO
6	TIME MACHINE
7	S2PID LUV
8	BLADE 2
9	E.T.
10	MIMIC 2

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	JOHN Q
2	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
3	WE WERE SOLDIERS
4	ICE AGE
5	SNAKE CHARMER
6	ITLOG
7	S2PID LUV
8	MONTE CRISTO

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	CLOSED
3	ICE AGE
4	MONTE CRISTO
5	S2PID LUV
6	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
7	CLOSED
8	SHIPPING NEWS

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7120015

1	BLADE 2
2	E.T.
3	BANDITS
4	ICE AGE
5	MAJESTIC
6	S2PID LUV

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1	HART'S WAR
2	E.T.
3	S2PID LUV
4	SHOWTIME

SM CINEMA GUADALUPE
8820984

1	IKA-7 GLORYA
2	HART'S WAR
3	S2PID LUV

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	HART'S WAR
2	SHOWTIME
3	S2PID LUV
4	HARI NG SELDA

SM CITY DAVAO
2976990

1	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	S2PID LUV
3	ROYAL TENENBAUMS
4	SNAKE CHARMER
5	ICE AGE
6	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED

SM BICUTAN

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

THE PODIUM
18 ADB Avenue. Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City

1
2

SOON TO OPEN!
2 NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART VISION & SOUND

6389781-85

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AYALA CINEMAS

ARTFILM - GREENBELT

NOW SHOWING

Art Film

THE BEST FILM OF 200

Javier Bardem Olivier Martinez Andrea Di Stefano
Johnny Depp & Sean Penn

"**'Before Night Falls'** is rapturous, intoxicating filmmaking... Don't miss it! Javier Bardem gives a mesmerizing and inspired performance!"
-Rex Reed, New York Observer

"**'Before Night Falls'** is a potent, visually stunning masterpiece! Javier Bardem gives a riveting, emotionally naked performace."
-Guy Flatley, Interview

WINNER!

Best Male Lead , **2001 Independent Spirit Awards**
Grand Jury Prize, Best Actor , **2000 Venice International Film Festival**
Best Actor (Bardem), **2000 National Board of Review**
Best Actor (Bardem), **2001 National Society of Film Critics**

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R) Strictly For Adults

WARNING! This film is unanimously rated R-18 for its adult thematic content which is Homosexuality and scenarios of NUDITY.

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METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

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1 (DDS)	BLADE 2
2 (SDDS)	TIME MACHINE
3 (DTS)	ICE AGE
4 GOLD (DTS)	SHOWTIME
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	HARTS WAR
6 GOLD (SDDS)	COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	E.T.
8	S2PID LUV
9	MIMIC 2
10	BLOW DRY

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	
2	
3 (DTS)	SHOWTIME
4	
5	
6 (DTS)	TIME MACHINE
Golden Pearl THX	

Masagana CINEMA 2000
(Pasay) tel 833.3274

1	S2PID LUV
2	SHOWTIME
3	ITLOG

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	S2PID LUV
2	SHOWTIME
3	HARI NG SELDA
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HARTS WAR
5	CROSS ROADS

METROPOLIS star
tel 850.4285

1	HARI NG SELDA
2	ITLOG
3	S2PID LUV
4	HARTS WAR
5	SHOWTIME
6	E.T.
7	
8	

PREMIERE CINEMA
LUCASFILM THX
(Makati City) TEL. 751-2010 TO 13

1	SHOWTIME

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	HARI NG SELDA
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	
2	IKA-7 GLORYA
3	

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	ITLOG
A	SHOWTIME

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	HARTS WAR
2	S2PID LUV
3	
4	HARI NG SELDA

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	HARTS WAR
2	
3	
4	COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
5	HARI NG SELDA
6	S2PID LUV
7 (DTS)	SHOWTIME
8 (SDDS)	BLADE 2
9 (DOLBY)	BLOW DRY

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	S2PID LUV

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	S2PID LUV
2	S2PID LUV
3	HARI NG SELDA
4 (SDDS)	HARTS WAR
5	ITLOG
6 (DOLBY)	BLADE 2
7 (DTS)	SHOWTIME
8	ICE AGE
9	TIME MACHINE

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	SHOWTIME
2	HARI NG SELDA
3	RESERVE
4	ICE AGE
5 (SDDS)	COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
6	S2PID LUV
7 (DOLBY)	BLADE 2
8	RESERVE

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	S2PID LUV
2	BLADE 2
3 (DTS)	SHOWTIME
4	HARI NG SELDA
5 (SDDS)	HARTS WAR

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	S2PID LUV

Sampaquita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	S2PID LUV

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson
Lords
Jennet

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	S2PID LUV
2	SHOWTIME
3	ITLOG

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	HARTS WAR
2	SHOWTIME
3	CLOSED
4	S2PID LUV
5	RESERVE

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1
2
3
4
5
6

FRC Cinema
Talaba Bacoor Cavite

1	GOT 2 BELIEVE
2	

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	S2PID LUV
2	ITLOG

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1
2

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	HARI NG SELDA
2	S2PID LUV
3 (DTS)	BLADE 2

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	S2PID LUV
2 (DTS)	BLADE 2
3 (DOLBY)	CROSSROADS
4	

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	S2PID LUV
2 (DOLBY)	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
3 (DTS)	CROSSROADS
4	BLADE 2

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	E.T.
2	S2PID LUV
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	S2PID LUV
2	MAJESTIC
3 (DOLBY)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
4 (DTS)	E.T.

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	HARTS WAR
2	HARI NG SELDA
3	ITLOG
4 (DTS)	S2PID LUV

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	BLADE 2
2	S2PID LUV
3 (DTS)	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
4	HARI NG SELDA
5	CROSSROADS

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	S2PID LUV
2	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
3	ITLOG

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
2	S2PID LUV
3	E.T.

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	HARI NG SELDA
2	ICE AGE
3	BIBINGKA

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	S2PID LUV
2	BLADE 2
3	

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	S2PID LUV
2 (DTS)	RESERVE

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1	

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	ITLOG
2	S2PID LUV
3	

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	JOHN Q
2	BEAUTIFUL MIND
3	ITLOG
4	BANDITS

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	BLADE 2
2	S2PID LUV
3 (DTS)	MAJESTIC
4	BANDITS

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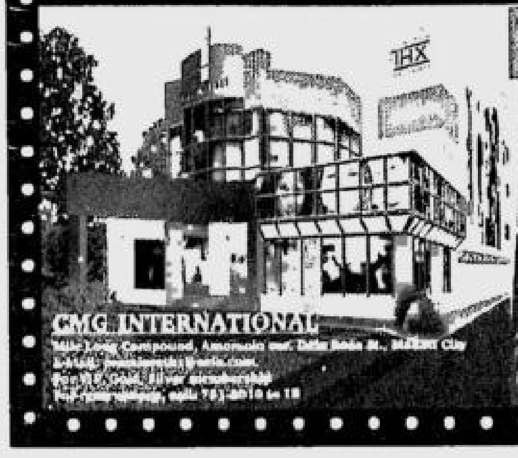
ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS



CMG INTERNATIONAL

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On alert. On patrol. On camera.
SHOWTIME

MOVIEWORLD

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1 THX	BLADE 2
2	ICE AGE
3	HARTS WAR
4	SHOWTIME
5	S2PID LUV
6	MONTE CRISTO
7	BLOW DRY
8	E.T.
9	TIME MACHINE
10	CROSS ROADS

Ermita
536 -7809- 12

1	HARTS WAR
2	E.T.
3	MONTE CRISTO
4	BLADE 2
5	S2PID LUV
6	BLOW DRY
7	SHOWTIME

Metro East -
Marcos hway 682- 8193 / 8280

1	SHOWTIME
2	ICE AGE
3	SHOWTIME
4	E.T.
5	BLADE 2
6	S2PID LUV
7	TIME MACHINE
8	MIMIC 2

Novaliches
935- 3229 - 30

1	HARTS WAR
2	ICE AGE
3	BLOW DRY
4	E.T.
5	BLADE 2
6	TIME MACHINE
7	S2PID LUV
8	SHOWTIME

Imus
471- 8188 / 875- 3838

1	BLADE 2
2	HARTS WAR
3	SHOWTIME
4	E.T.
5	S2PID LUV
6	BLOW DRY

Bacolod
441- 0453 / 0459

1	E.T.
2	JOHN Q
3	HARI NG SELDA
4	GOT 2 BELIEVE
5	MONTE CRISTO
6	WE WERE SOLDIERS

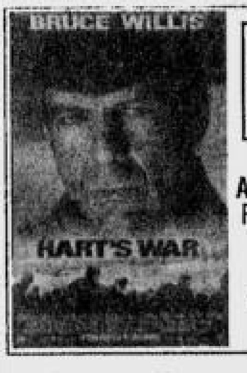
Iloilo
336- 8077 - 78

1	MONTE CRISTO
2	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
3	JOHN Q
4	SHIPPING NEWS
5	S2PID LUV
6	E.T.

Star Mills-
Sn Fernando, Pamp. 875- 1927
961-5318 / 5270

1	MAJESTICS
2	BANDITS
3	BLADE 2
4	S2PID LUV
5	E.T.
6	

malabon citisquare-
soon to open.



Late Night Screening
on
April 12 & 13, 2002
Friday & Saturday -
11:00 p.m. @
Robinsons Movieworld Galleria

how-2-reach-us:

email: htc@netasia-mnl.net
http://www.robinsonsmovieworld.com
call-a-movie 536- 7812

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Film on gay artist showing at Greenbelt

EXPERIENCE the lust for life of celebrated Cuban poet and novelist Reinaldo Arenas in the film "Before Night Falls," now showing at ArtFilm in Greenbelt, Makati City.

"Before Night Falls" won the grand jury prize and best actor award for its lead Javier Bardem at the Venice International Film Festival.

The American Film Institute named it Movie of the Year. Bardem also got the best actor nod from the National Society of Film Critics and National Board of Review. Moreover, he was nominated for an Oscar and a Golden Globe for his rich and evocative performance of a physically and emotionally tormented freeman that is Arenas.

Director Julian Schnabel lifts the film from Arenas' memoir of the same title, "Before Night Falls," voted by the New York Times Book Review as one of the 10 best books of 1993.

Schnabel expresses his joy of bringing Arenas to the big screen. "It is my privilege to bring Reinaldo's voice to film," he says. "I think it's a voice for many Cubans who we haven't heard, an outrageous voice full of humor that has turned suffering into great beauty."

In his youth, Arenas saw only freedom and beauty. He was a great artist whose writing prowess was well received by his peers.

"Before Night Falls" also stars Andrea di Stefano, Olivier Martinez, Sean Penn and Michael Wincott.

Johnny Depp takes on dual roles of a flamboyant transvestite cum smuggler and a menacing soldier.

Cunningham O'Keefe and Lazaro Gomez Carriles (friend and heir of Arenas' estate) wrote the biographic account with Schnabel.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	S2PID LUV
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	HARI NG SELDA
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	BLADE 2
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HART'S WAR
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	SHOW TIME
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	BLOW DRY
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	E.T.
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	HARI NG SELDA
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	BLADE 2
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	HUBOG / TOO MUCH FLESH
ODEON	SHOWTIME
ODEON-2	HARI NG SELDA
ROBEN	ITLOG
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	HARRY POTTER / PHOSSED
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	ITLOG
REMAR	HARI NG SELDA
REMAR-2	ITLOG
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	S2PID LUV
B	ITLOG
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HART'S WAR
CINEMA-2	E.T.
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	HARI NG SELDA
CINEMA-2	IKA-7 GLORYA
CINEMA-3	ITLOG
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BLADE 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	ICE AGE
CINEMA-6	GOT 2 BELIEVE
CINEMA-7	CROSS ROADS
CINEMA-8	TIME MACHINE
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HARTS WAR
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SHOW TIME
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
CINEMA-12	MIMIC 2
CINEMA-14	E.T.
CINEMA-15	S2PID LUV
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	E.T.
CINEMA-2	SHOWTIME
CINEMA-3	HART'S WAR
CINEMA-4	COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
CINEMA-5	MIMIC 2
CINEMA-6	ICE AGE
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

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E.T. - GP 11:20, 1:50, 4:20, 6:50, 9:30	**SHOWTIME - P 13** 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50	**HART'S WAR - P 13** 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00
COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO - P 13 1:40, 4:15, 6:50, 9:30	**MIMIC 2 - P 13** 12:35, 2:25, 4:15, 6:05, 7:55, 9:45	**ICE AGE - GP** 12:20, 2:10, 4:00, 5:50, 7:40, 9:30

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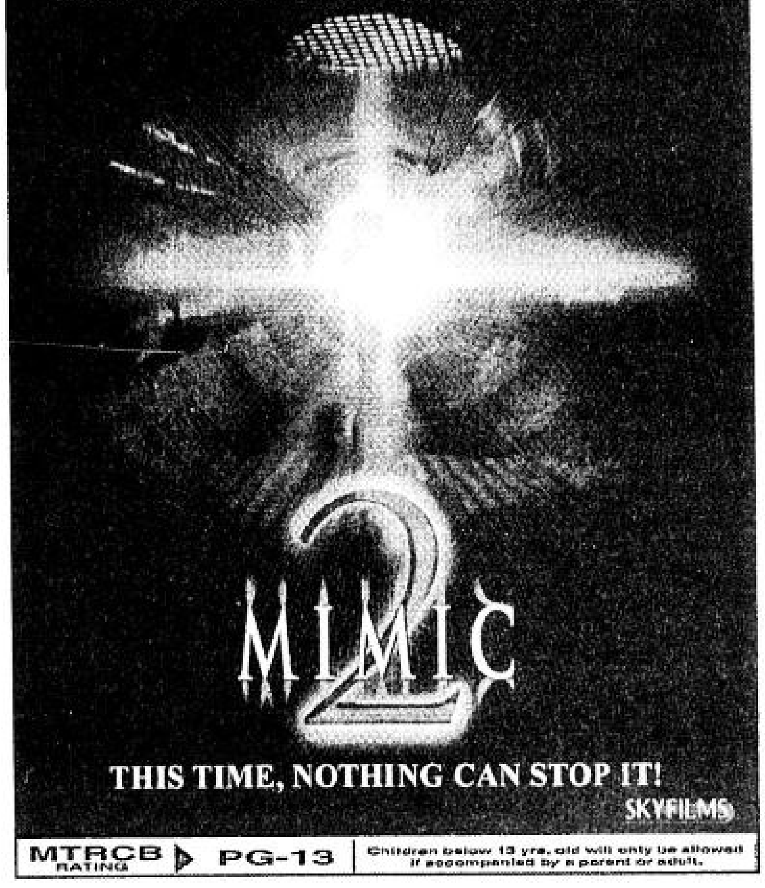

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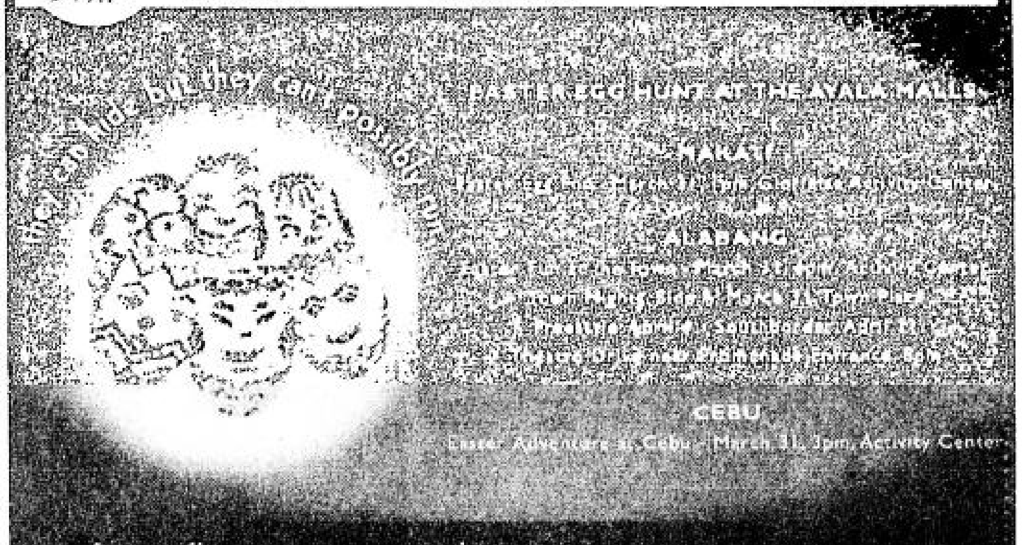
1 S2PID LUV	1 ICE AGE	4 BLOW DRY	1 BEFORE NIGHT FALLS	1 HART'S WAR THX
2 HART'S WAR	2 E.T.	5 MIMIC 2	2 HART'S WAR	2 SHOWTIME
3 BLADE 2	3 HART'S WAR THX GUARANTEED SEATS	6 SHOWTIME	3 SHOWTIME	3 ICE AGE
4 SHOWTIME		7 COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO	4 Onstage LANI ON SATGE APRIL 12, 13, 19, 20, 26 & 27 9:00 PM	4 E.T.
				5 COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO

The Ayala Malls Events

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

MAKATI ALABANG CEBU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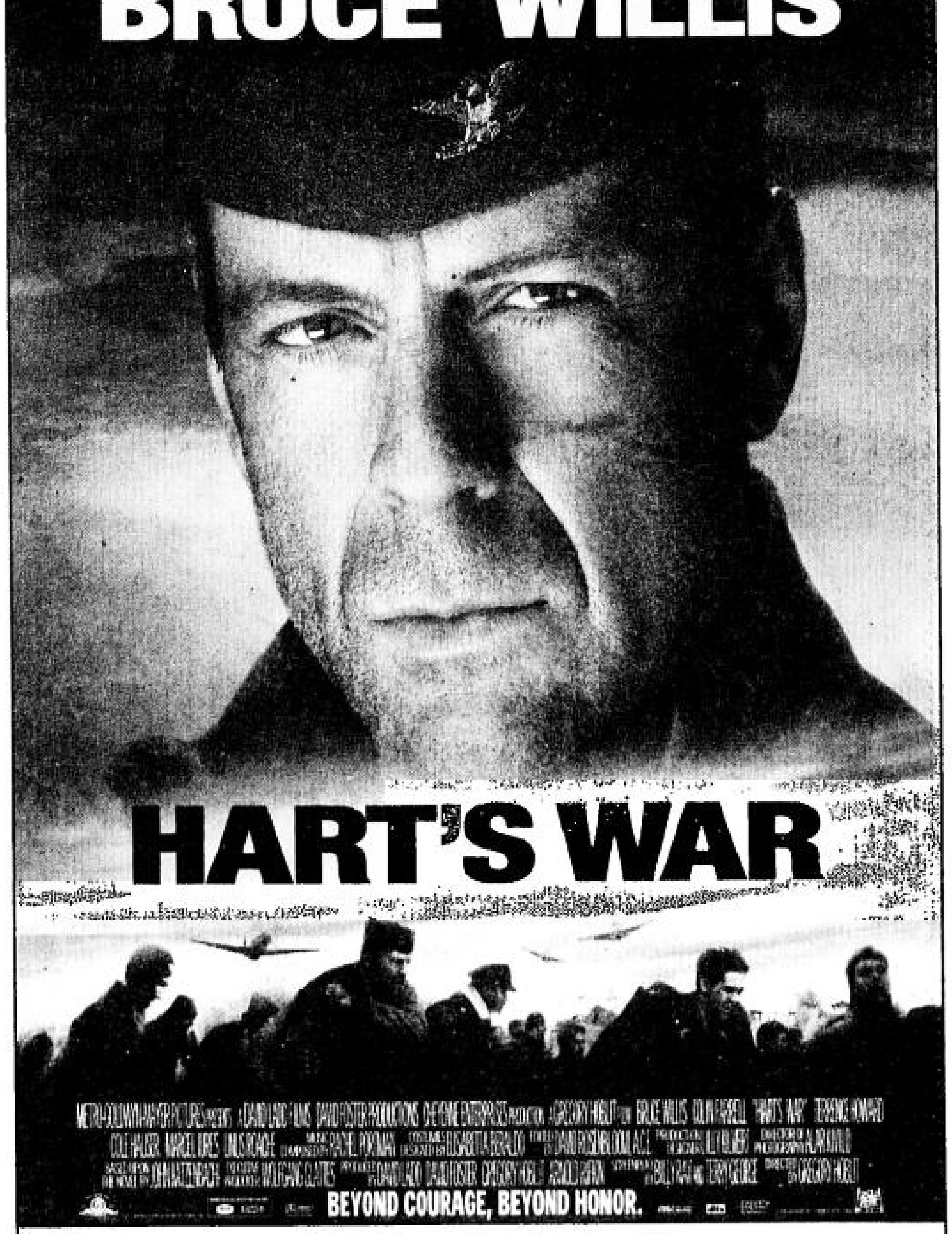

NOW SHOWING

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

The plot thickens

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE thought that, after one seemingly interminable week of "total" **Rico Yan** TV coverage, the small screen would finally revert back to business as usual. But here we are, two weeks after Good Friday, and the tragic event and its side issues don't seem to be anywhere ready to resolving themselves.

Item: After tearfully professing her abiding love for Rico, **Claudine Barretto** found herself on the receiving end of a number of brickbats, including her being "dis-encouraged" from getting close to Rico's casket during his funeral.

Item: She became even more controversial when it was revealed that **Raymart Santiago** was courting her.

Item: Feeling the pressure, she opted to go abroad for a few days to cool off and rethink her options. But she vowed to come home in a few days to definitively give her side on the controversy at a presscon.

Item: **Rosanna Roces** was reported to have said something negative about "the other camp," GMA 7 officially distanced itself from, ending its statement with a line about possible sanctions.

Item: On phone patch from abroad, Claudine's *Ate* **Gretchen** accused "the other side" of continuing to spread poisonous text messages against Claudine. She also congratulated Rosanna for saying what she did—whereupon the phone patch was suddenly cut off.

Item: Raymart candidly admitted that he was courting Claudine and hoped that the ensuing controversy wouldn't negatively affect his chances of getting her "*matamis na oo*" sometime soon.

What does this new wave of developments mean? That we'll probably be subjected to more Rico-related controversies for the whole month of April. What a dispiriting prospect.

Best of National Geographic Channel

THE NATIONAL Geographic channel has launched a new program "Nat Geo Max" that features the channel's best features, world exclusives, premiere series and award-winners. Telecast time: 9 p.m., Monday to Friday.

In another new move, primetime hours will be scheduled in five one-hour strips that feature different themes: At 7 p.m., "On the Edge," programs on adventure and exploration. At 8 p.m., "Wild." At 9 p.m., "Nat Geo Max." At 10 p.m., "People and Places." And, at 11 p.m. "Sci-Files," featuring science and technology.

The idea is to make it easier for viewers to find their favorite programs, and to facilitate habitual viewing.

This month, "Nat Geo Max" premieres with blue-chip programs like "Adventures in Time" (featuring Geographic), "Great White, Deep Trouble," "Wolves of the Sea," "King Gimp," "Available: The White Death," and "Myths and Logic of Shaolin Kungfu."

Feedback

WE'VE gotten a number of calls from readers reacting to our piece on the "overkill" of exhibitionistic death, wake and burial of Rico Yan. Most were in agreement, although some criticized us for being "sensitive" to the feelings of Rico's bereaved cohosts, and to "Filipino traditions."

Whatever your thoughts on the matter, the important thing is that the issue be brought out into the open and discussed, in the hope that TV will do better in the future.

'Sade Lovers Live'

ON STAR World on Sunday, April 20 at 11 a.m., **Sade** will be showcased in the music special, "Sade: Lovers Live." The music of "Lovers Rock" is here, as well as velvety showstoppers as "Smooth Operator" and "Pearls," alongside bewitching earlier material like "Sweetest Taboo" and "Your Groove Is King."

As a souvenir, Sony Music has released "Sade: Lovers Live" on compact disc and cassette.

Boxers' shows

GLADYS and the Boxers with K will perform this month at Ratsky's Malate—April 11, 18 and 25 at 11 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. The musical-comedy group also performs at Soundstage Cainta on Tuesdays, and at Kampo West on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

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Joey and Alma together again?

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

WHAT'S this juicy information I got from a Parañaque City Hall insider that Mayor **Joey Marquez** and wife **Alma Moreno** are back in each other's arms?

My well-informed source squealed, "Joey is really hopelessly in love with Alma, that's why he agreed to all her conditions and took her back. The house that Alma claimed to be renting for P45,000 a month when they parted ways is actually Joey's house which was given to him by a Chinese businesswoman for letting her business operate in Parañaque. Besides, *pusong mamon si* Mayor Joey when it comes to their kids."

Only heaven knows if their reconciliation is for keeps. Or do they have a political agenda?

What was all that fuss about Alma's alleged young lover and Joey's filing for annulment? Were they just acting out a lover's quarrel for show?

When a man's dead. . .

ROSSANA Roces dropped a bombshell when she bluntly announced on "Startalk" that **Rico Yan** and **Dominic Ochoa** bought Ecstacy pills before they left for Dos Palmas.

I feel the issue is already moot and academic. As they say, don't kick a man when he's down. Or when he's dead.

Is it true that GMA 7 sanctioned Osang for her bold pronouncements? Knowing Osang, she elicited her desired response.

Let's see if she'll go fly a kite or catch a boomerang.

Kuh by Kata

ALLOW me to give way to a piece by my friend **Kata Inocencio**. Kata and I share the sentiments of **Kuh Ledesma** when it comes to spiritual matters. Come and see for yourself why Kuh is higher than high this weekend at the Music Museum.

"Not too long ago, I sang her songs with all the heart and vocal prowess that I could muster. 'Dito Ba?' while in search of my place in the sun. 'I Think I'm in Love' when I thought I was in love. 'Ako ay Pilipino' when nationalism was demanded of every Filipino.

"She inspired me so that I did in my life everything she sang, literally. I found for myself my own little place in the broadcast industry, fell in and out of love, and marched together with all patriots in Edsa 1 and 2.

"Kuh Ledesma could actually move you to live the songs she sings. The original diva, with the nightingale's voice and that take-me-or-leave-me stance, obviously had an undying commitment to her art and she always reinvents herself and her works. Kuh never fails to surprise her audience with her original, inspiring, bold and daring trend-setting concepts, and all are excellently done. I was particularly awestruck and mesmerized when I watched Kuh in 'On Higher Ground' at the Music museum recently.

"Kuh did the unexpected by opening her show with a popular upbeat Christian song, 'Open the Eyes of My Heart,' soulfully sang all her songs, including several spiritual songs, and unabashedly shared her true-to-life story, and her audience didn't know what hit them. This 'Ice Lady' had her heart and soul on fire.

"She sang 'Impossible Dream' with so much fervor and candor that I wept throughout the song. Even the late **Ninoy Aquino** would have agreed this was the best rendition of his favorite song.

"Judging from the glow on her face and her youthful looks, one would think that Kuh is in love. And in love she is, indeed, with her Maker, Redeemer, Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

"Kuh had been separated from husband **Louie Gonzalez** for four years. But she is very hopeful that her marriage will be restored. God has told her so and she believes."

Kuh is repeating "On Higher Ground" at the Music Museum on April 12 and 13. Daughter **Isabella** and Ms **Pilita Corrales** will join her in the concert.

For bag ladies

CHECK out the hip and chic bags designed by my best *amiga* **Allana Lopez** Montelibano at third level of The Podium exhibit, April 12-14. Her line is aptly called Heureaux ("happy" in French) because they match the fun-spirited side of every party girl.

See yah there, bag ladies.

For feedback, e-mail luvludg@hotmail.com, friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com, wateringhole2000@yahoo.com

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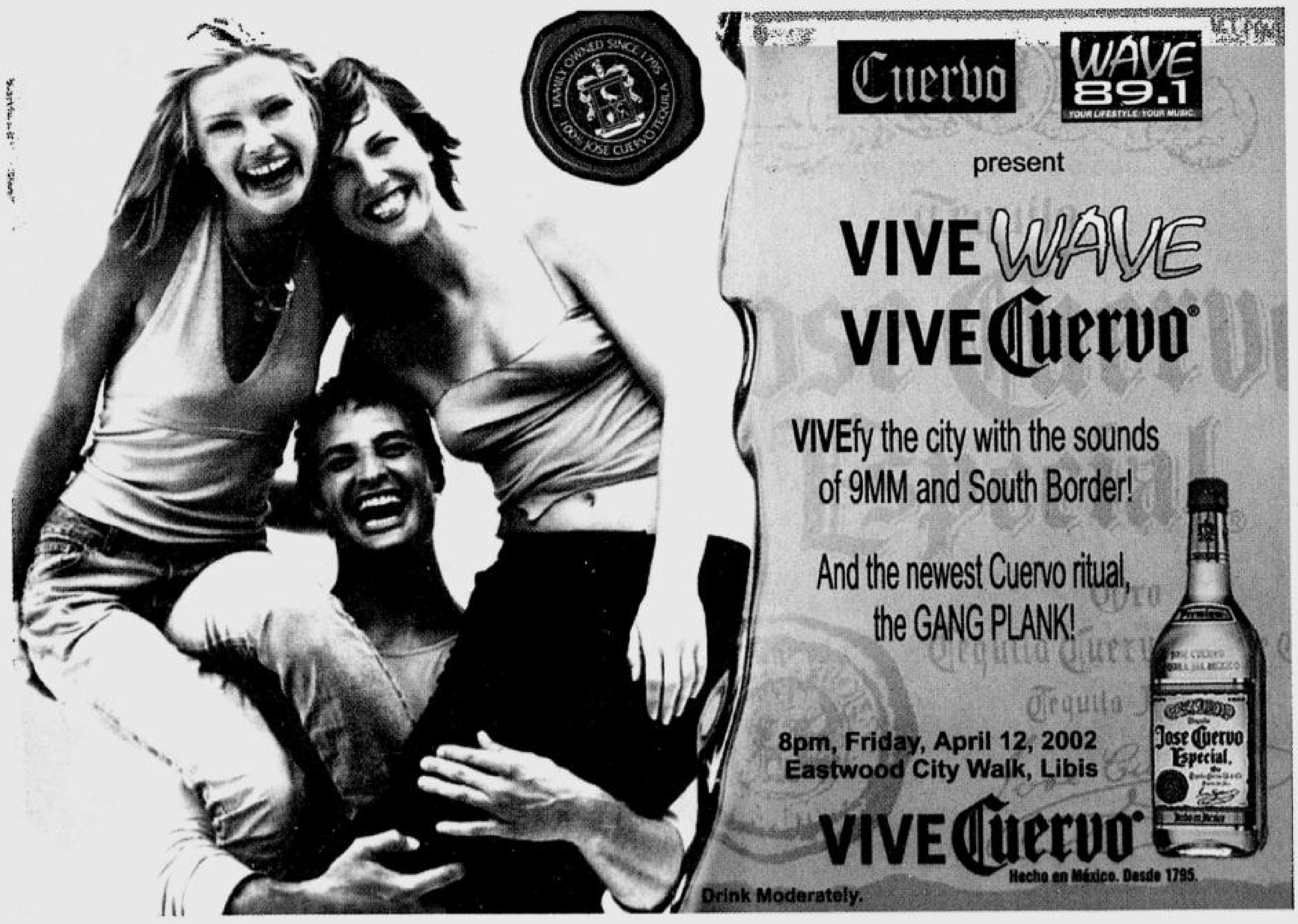
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NY Mayor Bloomberg joins 'Producers' stars in spoof

NEW YORK —For his first onstage antics at the annual Inner Circle charity dinner, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg joined the new stars of the Broadway show "The Producers" in a musical spoof poking fun at his victory in last year's City Hall race.

At the black-tie benefit, reporters lampoon city politics and the mayor takes the stage for a musical comeback.

In this year's media skit, "Thanks a Billion," reporters needled the billionaire mayor for the $76.4 million of his personal fortune he spent during his campaign—the most ever spent on a non-presidential race in the United States.

Bloomberg's rebuttal featured actors Steven Weber and Henry Goodman choosing him as a mayoral candidate sure to lose—a spinoff of the award-winning musical, in which the actors play a producer and accountant who try to scam investors with a surefire Broadway flop.

Bloomberg also showed off his legs in Bermuda shorts and a Hawaiian-print shirt Saturday night, a gag on the media attention he has received for refusing to disclose his whereabouts during weekends out-of-town, including one at his estate in Bermuda. **AP**

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BUSINESS

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US cites woes in RP anti-piracy drive

Fund lack, deficient laws among problems

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE US Trade Representative has blamed the Philippine government's low budget allocation, lax penalties and deficient laws for the rampant piracy of software, movies, music and books in the country.

In its latest National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers, the USTR said that "significant problems remain in ensuring the consistent and effective protection of intellectual property rights (IPR)."

The USTR said US distributors had claimed losses of $120 million last year from high levels of pirated optical discs of movies, musical works and computer games and widespread unauthorized transmissions of movies and television programs on cable TV.

The USTR expressed concern over the deficiencies in the Intellectual Property Code, which provides the legal framework for IPR protection in the Philippines. It is particularly concerned about the code's ambiguous provisions on the rights of copyright owners over broadcast, rebroadcast, cable retransmission of their works; burdensome restrictions affecting contracts to license software and other technology, and the court's lack of authority to order the seizure of pirated materials as a provisional measure without notice to the suspected violator.

The USTR said the government's budgetary shortfall had exacerbated the resource constraints already hobbling the operations of agencies tasked with IPR enforcement such as the National Bureau of Investigation, Videogram Regulatory Board, and National Telecommunications Commission.

The USTR complained that enforcement agencies would not proactively target infringement unless the copyright owners take charge in going after the bootleggers.

Even the 48 special courts handling IPR violations have been hampered by lack of funds as well as heavy non-IPR load which led to delays in the issuance of warrants and very few arrests. Copyright owners prefer to settle out of court than push through with their legal cases.

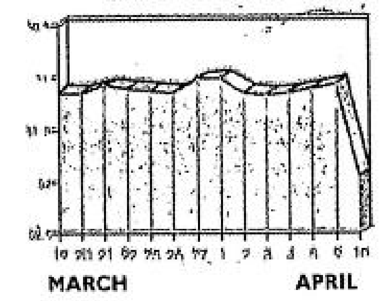
Aside from weak laws and low budget, the USTR said the Philippines failed to establish

US/ B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



GRAPHS BY ROBERT ANDRES

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₱51.95 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 10, 2002

¥130.42 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 10, 2002

GOLD: $297.80/298.30
per ounce Hong Kong,
April 10, 2002

STOCK MARKET

Shares down

STOCKS drifted lower again yesterday as some investors, spooked by the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, trimmed holdings, traders said.

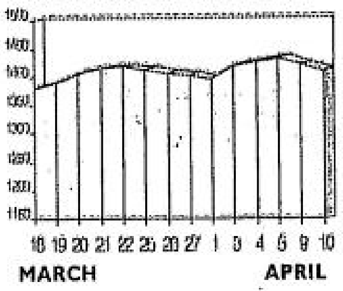
Fears are growing that protracted hostilities will further spike up oil prices, hindering recovery of the still fragile corporate sector.

"I think investors are kind of hesitant to enter the market at this point because of the Middle East conflict and its implications for oil prices," KGI Securities, vice president for sales, Henry Ong said.

The main index closed down 11.26 points, or 0.79 percent, to 1,410.04 points.

Traders noted that investor interest was muted with turnover of just P533.89 million, down from P562.91 million on Tuesday. *Reuters*

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Asian miracle seen losing gloss, but not all

SINGAPORE—Confidence in the "Asian Miracle" was once so unwavering that in 1997, World Bank president James Wolfensohn termed the Asian financial crisis a "hiccup," a comment he later had to qualify.

Now, as Asia's economies claw back from their second slowdown in five years, after 30 years of almost uninterrupted growth, economists caution that a quick return to double-digit growth is unlikely due to underlying structural problems.

And it's not just economists who are seeking to temper expectations. Singapore president S. R. Nathan warned last month that sizzling growth rates may be a thing of the past.

"That phase of our economic development is over," he said.

The Asian Development Bank on Tuesday underlined the view that the best may be past, forecasting regional growth will be "below historical long-run growth rates" in coming years.

How things have changed.

For instance, an International Monetary Fund working paper estimates that while an average non-Asian in 1990 was 72 percent richer than his parents in 1960, the corresponding figure for an average Korean was no less than 638 percent.

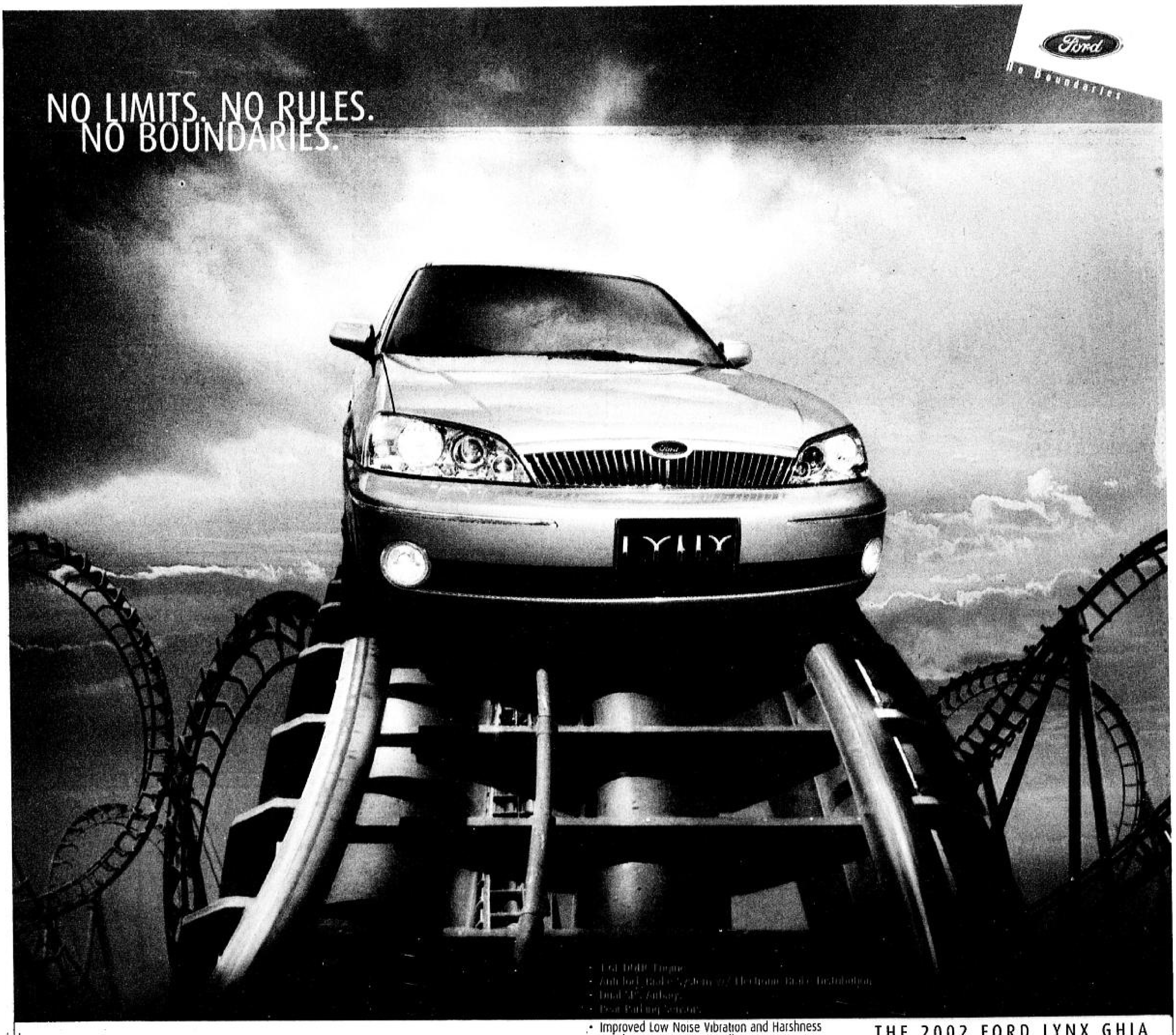
Few investors in that high growth period took notice of the academic debate on the sources of growth in the region and on warnings by some economists that these economies would eventually run into, maybe not a wall, but certainly a hill.

Now, rather than marveling at the rapid growth rates, a growing body of economists are looking more closely at the chinks in Asia's economic armor.

"The Asian crisis has taken quite a bit of the gloss off the Asian miracle. Investors will now be looking through the cyclical upturn to identify economies that can grow on a sustained basis," said Paul Sheard, Lehman Brothers' managing director and chief economist Asia in Tokyo.

The Asian Development Bank's "Asian Outlook 2002" says that growth in the next few years would depend on the strength of external conditions but in the long-run ultimately domestic conditions and structural issues

ASIAN/ B2



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Ford Cebu, Magallanes cor. P. Burgos St., Cebu City 6000, Trunk Line [illegible]
Ford Davao, Km. 6, Lanang, Davao City, [illegible]

Focus anti-smuggling efforts on 7 key ports, Customs urged

A PRIVATE sector-led task force is urging the Bureau of Customs to focus its resources on the country's seven major ports to repel the entry of smuggled goods into the country.

Federation of Philippine Industries chair Meneleo Carlos said smuggling had become an even more serious problem this year with the increase in narcotics being brought through the country's ports.

The Task Force—composed of officials of FPI, Makati Business Club, Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines and Management Association of the Philippines—believes that concentrating the BOC's resources on the seven major ports would be more successful in curbing smuggling rather than by spreading its resources to a broad watch area.

Businessman Raul T. Concepcion said the seven critical ports identified by the task force were the Subic Freeport zone, Manila, Cebu, Batangas, Manila, Davao and Zamboanga.

Carlos said smuggling, mainly of commodities such as rice, sugar, cement and petrochemical products, and consumer items like cars and apparel, remained as one of the most serious concerns of businessmen because they pose unfair competition to legitimate businesses.

But Carlos said the government needed to address smuggling soon especially because illegal drugs have become one of the most rampantly smuggled items in the country in the past few months.

Carlos said clamping down on smuggling would also help boost government revenues. The BOC is targeting to raise P115 billion in revenues this year amid lower import volume and lower tariffs.

Malacañang formed the task force to enable the private sector representatives to take a more direct hand in checking smuggling compared with mere consultations in the past.

Local refineries increase crude inventories

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE COUNTRY'S oil refiners have increased their inventories as the escalating Mid-East tension triggered fears of a global oil supply crisis.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. yesterday said oil companies were now maintaining a 66-day inventory, higher than their previous 52-day stock.

Concerns over a possible disruption of oil supply to the country were raised in light of the heightened tension between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

In protest to Israel's invasion of certain Palestine territories, Iraq early this week stopped exporting crude. The embargo will last for 30 days.

About two-thirds of the world's oil reserves are in the Middle East.

Last week, Perez said the government was considering the possibility of using Malampaya crude for local use. The government had planned to export the crude extracted from Malampaya. He said this was one way to cope with a possible oil shortage.

The official noted that the Malampaya field was producing 23,500 barrels a day, representing 7 percent of the country's daily consumption of about 334,000 barrels.

In an earlier interview, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. country chair Eliseo Santiago said Shell Philippines Exploration BV was set to make two more shipments of crude (about 600,000 barrels each) to Chevron-Texaco's refinery in South Korea.

Santiago said Spex—project operator of the Malampaya oil and gas projects—expected the Malampaya oil field to produce about 2 million barrels by May.

"We are exporting to Korea because (the Korean imported) placed the highest bid," Santiago told reporters. "Our first shipment was 616,000 barrels."

The chief of Royal Dutch/Shell Group's local unit said the extended oil well test in Malampaya would take until May to finish.

Santiago noted that the Malampaya oil well's output was very significant compared with the country's total oil production in recent years.

According to data from the energy department, the country produced a total of only 42,000 barrels of crude in 2000. Malampaya produced 616,000 barrels in only two months.

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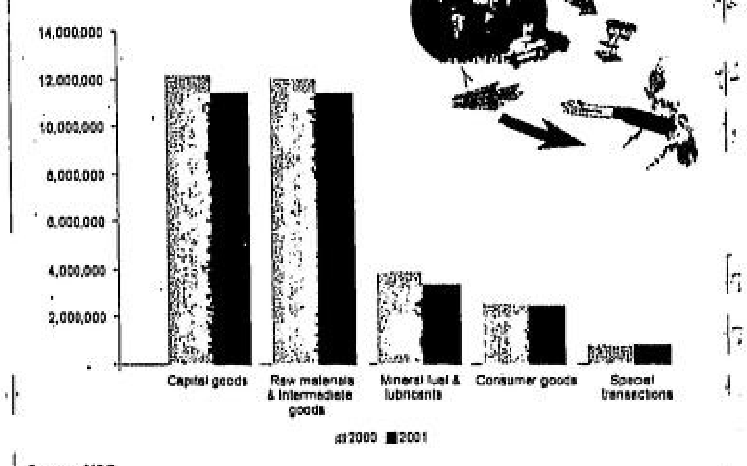
INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Imports by major type of goods

(January to December 2000 & 2001, in thousand dollars)



Source: NSO

THIRTY-NINE percent of country's total imports from January to December last year was made up of capital goods. Raw materials and intermediate goods accounted for 39 percent of total imports at $11.4 billion. Capital goods included telecommunications equipment which accounted for $6.1 billion of the total. Imports for the entire year fell by 5.9 percent to $29.8 billion from last year's level.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

GOINGS-ON

Packaging seminar

THE PHILIPPINE Trade Training Center, an attached agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, will conduct a seminar on packaging and labeling for Processed Food on April 18-20, 2002 at Seminar Room G, 2nd Floor of the PTTC Bldg., Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue cor. Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

The seminar will cover the following: Status of the food packaging industry, product-package interaction, different types of food packages, packaging development process, graphic designs considerations, food packaging designs and trends, and labeling requirements in the Philippines.

Lecture on stock market

WITH the market swamped with positive news and the outlook for economic recovery brightening, backed by improving corporate fundamentals, investors are once more excited and confident to invest.

With this as a backdrop, A. T. Valino Public Relations Firm is holding a seminar on "How To Win and Invest in the Philippine Stock Market" on April 20, 2002, Saturday, at the Mondragon House, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

Lecturer is Irving Ackerman, president of I. Ackerman Inc., one of the country's top stockholders, who will expound on the basic tenets of stock market investments. He will give participants tips on which stocks are doing well and those that show potential in the market.

AFP-RSBS ends losing streak, posts ₱38M in net income

THE AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System (AFP-RSBS) last year posted a net income of P38 million, ending a three-year losing streak.

Cesar M. Jayme Jr., AFP-RSBS president and chief executive officer, attributed last year's performance to the agency's three-pronged rehabilitation program that called for financial, organizational and structural reforms.

Debt reduction and restructuring, cost rationalization and recovery of non-performing loans were vigorously pursued to complement income generation. These efforts resulted in total revenues of P532 million during the year.

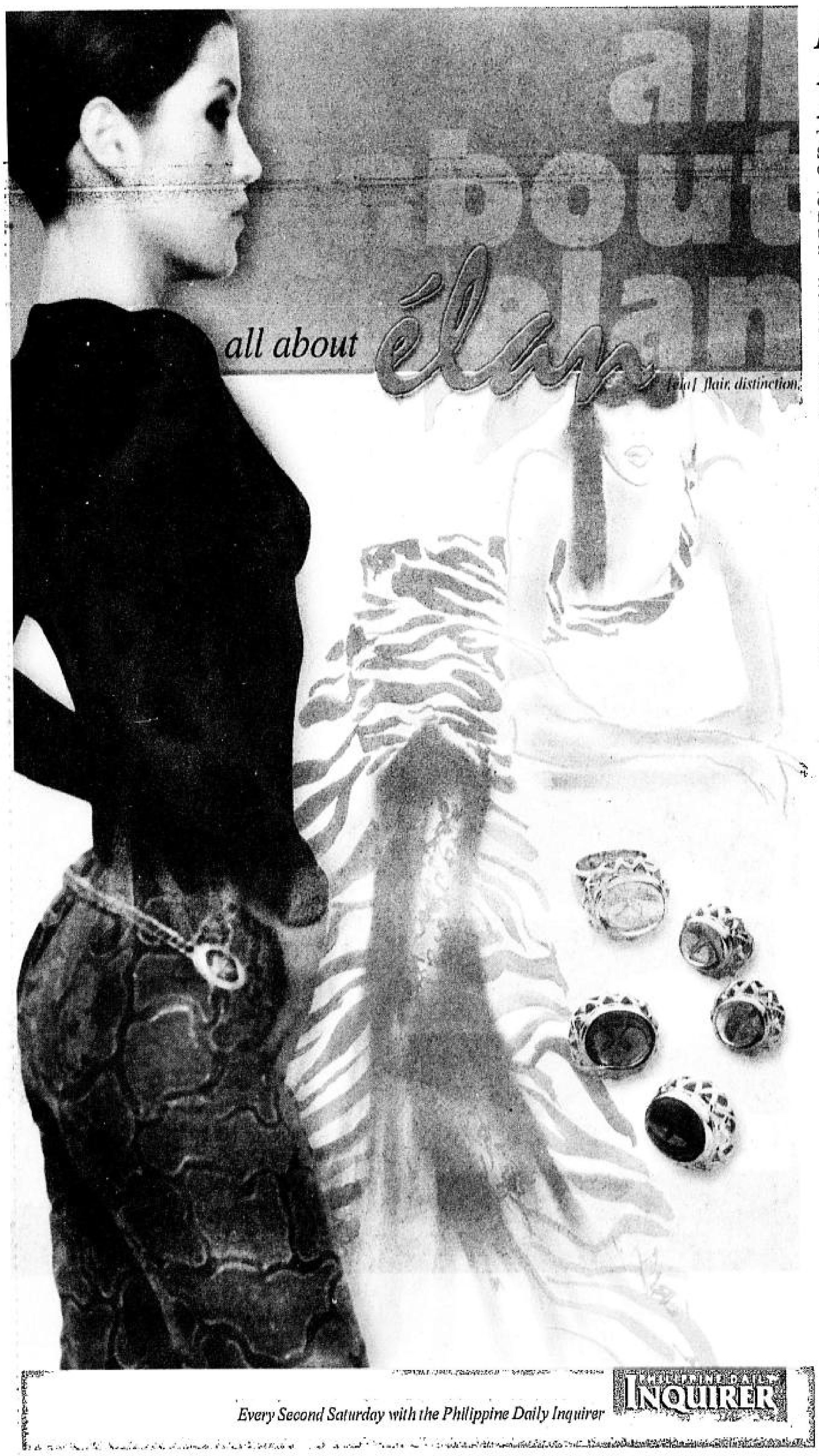
Negotiations with creditor banks led to *dacion en pago* or payment of portion of its debts in kind and restructuring arrangements that lowered the interest liabilities of the agency from P337 million to only P197 million.

Jayme further said the system had vigilantly kept members' contributions and earnings intact.

However, Jayme added that the long-term viability of the system would not only depend on financial recovery but also on structural reforms, which called for the amendment of the AFP-RSBS charter through legislation.

The amendment will address the inconsistencies in the military pension scheme and in the system's role in the delivery of retirement benefits to its members. Thus, the legislative reform agenda was another major effort in which the system took a lead role in 2001.

The Task Force on Legislative Reform was created and is now conducting extensive researches on global and local pension reform models, consultations with experts and advocacy campaigns.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INQUIRER

Asian miracle . . .

From page B1

would matter.

"The primary medium- to long-term internal risk to the ability of a large number of member countries to generate stronger growth rates is that slow progress in structural reforms will inhibit domestic demand and productivity growth".

Broadly speaking, long-term economic growth is seen as a function of three factors—employment growth, investment growth and growth in productivity, defined as the best use and management of existing resources both capital and human.

The academic debate took a dramatic turn in 1992 when Alwyn Young, then a professor at the Boston University, and later in 1994 MIT's Paul Krugman, argued that that rapid growth had come primarily from high rates of capital infusion—more factories and machines—and labor force participation, not productivity growth.

High rates of investments in a low productivity environment, eventually suffer "diminishing returns," a phenomenon that plagued the Soviet Union. Demographic factors like a shrinking work force also take its toll.

The United Nations estimates that the ratio of working-age population to non-working-age in East Asia will start declining from 2010. By 2050 the population age 60 years and older will rise to 31 percent from 12 percent in 2002.

Paul Sheard puts the dilemma more simply.

"It (rapid growth) was a period when lots of favorable factors were stacked up.

"(There was a) very favorable external growth picture, a very big technology gap, the ability to free up resources within the economy like people moving from the countryside into urban areas and a lot of direct foreign investment. It's difficult to see all of those factors coming back," he said.

Only productivity growth can compensate for the diminishing impact from the other two factors of the growth equations, said Kenneth Courtis, Goldman Sach's vice chair in Tokyo.

"The bottom line is pretty simple. We know what the demographics are and you can't really change them. It's really on the productivity side where the difference are going to be made," he said. *Reuters*

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SYNOPSIS OF ANNUAL STATEMENT
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2000

ADMITTED ASSETS:		
BONDS		P 329,830.82
INVESTMENT IN TREASURY BILLS		17,825,900.00
STOCKS		20,117,086.26
REAL ESTATE		100,426.15
MORTGAGE LOANS		400,000.00
SECURITY FUND		36,873.00
OTHER LOANS		150,812.13
CASH IN OFFICE AND IN BANKS		22,132,070.63
PREMIUMS RECEIVABLE		27,675,784.92
PREMIUMS DUE FROM CEDING COMPANIES		28,042,508.01
REINSURANCE RECOVERABLE ON LOSSES		67,393,335.68
PREMIUMS RESERVE WITHHELD BY CEDING COMPANIES		464,288.53
LOSS RESERVE WITHHELD BY CEDING COMPANIES		131,375.85
ACCRUED INVESTMENT INCOME		56,597.40
ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING MACHINE		464,675.29
TOTAL ADMITTED ASSETS		P 185,321,561.67
LIABILITIES:		
LOSSES AND CLAIMS PAYABLE		P 38,992,551.83
LOSS ADJUSTMENT EXPENSE PAYABLE		1,074,966.19
RESERVE FOR UNEARNED PREMIUMS		17,734,817.48
PREMIUMS DUE TO REINSURERS		17,699,141.87
PREMIUMS RESERVE WITHHELD FOR REINSURERS		6,649,182.34
OTHER RI ACCOUNTS PAYABLE		2,878,897.72
COMMISSIONS PAYABLE		4,836,716.54
TAXES PAYABLE		11,677,085.88
CATASTROPHE LOSS RESERVE		242,812.00
UNEARNED BOND DISCOUNT		850,017.66
OTHER LIABILITIES		3,266,560.52
TOTAL LIABILITIES		P 105,902,750.03
STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY		
CAPITAL STOCK PAID-UP	P 62,500,000.00	
CONTRIBUTED SURPLUS	500,000.00	
FLUCTUATION RESERVE-STOCKS	3,887,133.44	
RETAINED EARNINGS	12,531,678.20	
TOTAL STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY		79,418,811.64
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY		P 185,321,561.67

(This Synopsis, prepared from the 2000 Annual Statement, approved by the Insurance Commissioner, is published pursuant to Section 225 of the Insurance Code of 1978, as amended.)

ADB asks gov't to speed up reforms under grains program

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN Development Bank has asked the Philippine government to firm up the implementation of key reforms tied to a $175-million grain sector development program approved by the bank two years ago.

ADB chief country officer to the Philippines Richard Ondrik said 18 of the 20 reforms pledged by the Philippines under the program were already in motion, but several key issues remained unresolved.

Among the reforms being sought by the ADB is the liberalization of rice trading in the country.

"The commitment is there, yet it (Manila) cannot maintain the way it is: a highly subsidized monopoly in rice trading and it has been recognized that this has to change," Ondrik told reporters in a recent interview.

"The government cannot afford to continue distorting the rice market," he said.

"(Rice trading liberalization) was promised in the (President's) Sona (State of the Nation Address). But on one time, the message we got was that monopoly had been extended and nobody else would be allowed to trade. Then, the next day, it's the Philippine International Trading Corp. that will be the official trading, and the National Food Authority won't be importing anymore," Ondrik said. "Then the next day, it's still the NFA which will import but will still pay the 50-percent tariff just like everybody else."

Ondrik lamented that the government was sending mixed signals on the remaining reforms needed under the grain sector development program.

"They are saying they're working on it, but there's a very real difference. There's no official word on whether they've done the reforms," Ondrik said, noting that the bank had sent letters to the government seeking clarification of these matters.

The Philippines, one of Asia's largest rice importers, has bought the staple since 1983 to fill shortfalls in local production.

Last month, the Macapagal administration said it had delayed its plan to dismantle this year the rice trading monopoly of state trading firm National Food Authority due to uncertainties over the recurrence of the El Niño weather pattern.

Officials said the plan to open up rice imports completely, which was meant to discourage smuggling of the grain, was postponed to next year.

Emirates Air seeking 8 more Manila-Dubai flights

By Abigail L. Ho

EMIRATES Airline said it would ask the Philippines for eight additional weekly flights along the Manila-Dubai route to meet growing demand.

"We want to fly two times a day, 14 flights a week. We're not looking at a less than 70-percent load factor," Emirates senior general manager Keith Longstaff said in a news briefing on Wednesday.

Load factor refers to the total number of seats actually occupied during flights.

Emirates currently flies only six times a week to Dubai with a load factor of as high as 85 percent.

Longstaff said demand for flights along the Manila-Dubai route had risen sharply over the years, as overseas Filipino workers continued to flock to Dubai.

"Our main concern is that the needs of the market are not met," he said.

He explained that since Emirates started flying twice weekly to Manila in 1990, it was granted additional flights only once—in 1991 when it got four more Manila-Dubai flights.

Passenger traffic, meanwhile, steadily rose. From 55,647 in 1992, the figure rose 174 percent to 152,286 last year.

PSALM says $710-M Ilijan plant to run as scheduled

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE POWER Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. said yesterday that the 1,200-megawatt Ilijan power plant would run commercially, as scheduled, in June, but that the contractors still faced a fine of $400,000 for each day of delay.

Under a build-operate-transfer contract between Napocor and Kepco Ilijan Power Corp., the power plant should have started commercial operation in January.

PSALM president Edgardo del Fonso said the project was on track, and that it was on the final stages of completion.

"Tests to see whether the generator turbines run properly still need to be done, but (at least two-thirds) of the facility is already completed," Del Fonso said in an interview.

He said, however, that Napocor was still bent on slapping fines against the contractors.

The $710-million, gas-fired power plant in Ilijan, Batangas, is part of the National Power Corp.'s assets that PSALM is taking over under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

The Korean Electric Power Corp. holds a 51-percent stake in Keilco.

Other investors include Mitsubishi Electric Corp., which holds 21-percent, Mirant Philippines Corp., 20 percent, and Kyushu Electric Corp., 8 percent.

Napocor awarded a 20-year BOT contract to Kepco, which, in turn, invited other firms to take part in the project, forming Keilco.

Keilco then hired the consortium of United Engineers International Inc., Raytheon-Ebasco Overseas Ltd. and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Construction to build the power plant starting in March 1999.

In an earlier interview, Keilco president Choi Byung-chul said his group was holding talks with energy officials but declined to give details.

"We are here to contribute to the Philippine economy, and we are doing our best to meet expectations," Choi said.

Napocor officer in charge Roland Quilala said earlier the power plant was still in the commissioning stage and was running at about 743-mw as of end-February.

"There is a technical problem with the facility. It is not a transmission line problem," Quilala said.

Fund lack, deficient laws . . .

From page B1

punitive sanctions that would deter IPR violators. These lax penalties have frustrated a number of copyright owners who spend money on investigation and litigation only to get nominal compensation from violators with no risk of imprisonment.

Among the country's few achievements in IPR concerns cited by the USTR were the Supreme Court's decision to allow copyright owners to include end-users of pirated products in their lawsuits and the pending bills in Congress to protect plant varieties and layout designs of integrated circuits.

In a press conference, visiting Assistant USTR for Asia-Pacific and Apec Affairs Ralph Ives said there was no plan to sanction the Philippines yet despite the Philippines being listed under the Special 301 priority watch list of the world's worst IPR violators.

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Automatic transmission for driving ease and convenience.
*All turbo equipped except for 4x2 standard. A/T available in 4x2 & 4x4.
Photo may vary from actual unit sold.

Shaving deposit

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

ROLANDO Quilala, OIC of the National Power Corp., the officer in charge, has a bright solution to our problem with high electricity rates.

By the way, ours are not even the highest electricity rates in all of Asia. That rich country called Japan beat us to the honor. We only have the second highest rates.

As consumers, anyway, we cannot even stop complaining about the highway-robbery called "generation" charges of Napocor.

Now we are already raising hell over a mere proposal for another kind of increase. It's the one Meralco is just trying to sneak on us in its "distribution" charges.

If we don't want high electricity rates, according to the great Quilala, all we have to do is, well, we should stop using electricity. Sure, boss! Shall we start now?

* * *

NOBODY can be sure that Quilala does not only intend to create enemies out of some 80 million of us, Filipinos, who are all consumers of electricity from Day One.

But I suspect that he is only the type of OIC, which really means that his is a temporary appointment, to say what's on his mind. Of course, it's a tiny pathetic mind.

Don't tell me it's all part of a grand conspiracy among Napocor, Meralco and this cute administration. Soon, Quilala may even be appointed Napocor president for life.

All right, let's take his bright idea seriously. Come to think of it, nobody is forcing us to use electricity. We can always all go back to firewood and candle.

Those are our only recourse, if we follow Quilala's bright idea. Of course, he did not say Napocor and Meralco are monopolies. We have no choice. What's the problem?

* * *

ONE of our big problems is this Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, nicknamed Bayan. It keeps on digging up evidence that Meralco is robbing us blind.

Bayan is about to file another complaint before the Energy Regulatory Commission against Meralco. Perhaps Bayan believes the ERC cares.

Anyway, the complaint has something to do with—in the words of Bayan secretary general Teddy Casiño—"a can of worms." And it's not even live bait.

The worms are actually "deposits." It's the money we, as customers, give to Meralco in advance before the utility monopoly can think of giving us a connection.

The deposit depends on Meralco's own estimate of our future monthly bills. In effect, we give Meralco money, so that it will allow us to give it more money later.

* * *

ACTUALLY, a lawyer named Leonardo Aurelio, who is also a CPA, a certified public accountant, raised the issue on such deposits some four long years ago.

So what happened to it? Well, nobody knows. I only know that even before Aurelio brought up the issue, Meralco was already asking for another rate increase.

Anyway, the latest financial statements of Meralco show that the deposits for connection amount to P6.2 billion, and the deposits for the meters, another P1.3 billion.

All in all, the deposits thus now amount to an amazing P7.5 billion over the years. This is year 2000 still. If nobody in Meralco shaves it, the deposit should be bigger today.

The same financial statements, as Aurelio found out, even claim that Meralco pays a lot of interest on those deposits. So when did you receive yours, Barok?

* * *

IT turned out that Barok, and actually most of us, never received interest payments on our so-called deposits with Meralco. It only paid interest to a select few.

The other day, over the greatest radio program in the world, Barangay 1026, aired over dzAR Angel Radyo, 1026 khz, Casiño said Meralco remitted interest to businesses.

Based on Meralco's own financial statements, those "deposits" only earned a little more than P3 billion in interest over the years—and they are many, many years.

As rule of thumb in investment, your money doubles every five years. I'm a Meralco customer for 20 years. By now, my original deposit must have earned 16 times.

Yet you and I don't get a centavo of those huge earnings. We are not big-time customers. Without any clout, we only exist to give Meralco our hard-earned pay.

* * *

BASED on its own financial statements, from out of our deposits from Day One, which means decades and decades ago, Meralco only earned some P3 billion in interest.

Do you think that Meralco is such a prudent investor of the money, which is not even its own money, but money of its tens of millions of customers. Think again!

For Bayan, the starring role in Meralco's bid for the rate increase is its auditor. Meralco says it does not earn enough. For proof, it has the financial statements.

And so Casiño had a thing or two to say about the external auditor of Meralco. What do you know—it's none other than the SGV.

It so happens that SGV is the local partner of the US-based Arthur Andersen, made famous by the collusion between auditor and management in the Enron debacle.

* * *

MERALCO insists that it just does not make enough money because it's RORB, the famous so-called return on rate base, is very low by world standards.

The RORB is not the way the genius Quilala spells "robot" despite the similarity of some letters. It is a ratio, a relationship between profits and assets.

Bayan says that Meralco has ways to hide its true RORB. Its assets are inflated. How much does it value its portion in the Rockwell development in Makati, for instance?

Moreover, back to the "deposit," Meralco charges its interest payments on the deposit as an expense, although Meralco never pays us a single centavo of it.

It lowers the income of Meralco, for Meralco to claim it is not making enough money. Most likely, on the say so of SGV, the ERC is going to believe all of it. *Patay*!

All that time, all that money is with Meralco. It gets us two ways. First, that's our money. Second, Meralco uses it to justify higher rates to get more money from us.

BPI fund manager announces plan to invest more in stocks

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE STOCK market may soon get a shot in the arm, as one of the country's largest fund managers is set to shift more of its funds into equities.

In a news briefing yesterday, BPI Asset Management senior vice president Adelbert Legasto disclosed that the group was considering shifting more of its portfolio into equities.

BPI Asset Management, which handles close to P100 billion from about a dozen common trust funds and mutual funds, has seen a number of positive economic factors that should push the stock market higher, Legasto said.

He said BPI Asset Management was considering bringing up its current equity exposure to 15 percent from 5 percent of its managed funds.

Over the next five to seven years, he said, the share of equity investments would likely rise even further to anywhere between 25 percent and 30 percent of the group's total managed funds.

"We hope to achieve that in a few years. We're shifting strategy because of the vibrant stock market," Legasto said.

He said the sharp decline in interest rates and inflation, stable foreign exchange rate and improved market sentiment on the government's ability to manage the peace and order situation in Mindanao combined to prod the return of foreign investors to the local bourse.

Legasto also said that the upgrades in the credit outlook on the Philippines' sovereign rating should also encourage foreign investors to reenter the country.

The Philippine Stock Exchange's composite index, consisting of a basket of 30 stocks, has appreciated 22 percent since the start of the year, making it the third best performing stock index in the region.

BPI Investment Management Inc. head Jo Ann Eala said the group was bearish on 10 stocks, including those of SM Prime, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Manila Electric Co., San Miguel Corp. and ABS-CBN Broadcast Communications, apart from Bank of the Philippine Islands itself and BPI's parent firm, Ayala Corp.

PSE board allows extended offsite afternoon trading

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange board agreed yesterday to lay the groundwork for an optional offsite afternoon trading from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

PSE Chair Vivian Yuchengco told reporters that the board arrived at a consensus to further extend afternoon trading, albeit on an optional basis.

Yuchengco said the PSE's floor arbitration and trading committee was set to meet today to firm up plans to modify the current afternoon trading hours of 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. after a one-hour lunch break.

The committee's recommendation would again be discussed for final board approval, she said.

"It's optional because it's going to be offsite," Yuchengco said.

The offsite afternoon trading, Yuchengco said, would allow stockbrokers to avoid traffic problems and enjoy longer lunch breaks, while the PSE would not have to incur higher operating costs since the two trading floors in Ayala and Ortigas would not be used during the extended hours.

Doris C. Dumlao

First Abacus sells stake in mutual fund unit

By Doris C. Dumlao

INVESTMENT holding firm First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp. has sold its entire stake in its mutual fund management unit, First Abacus Investment Management Inc. (Faimi), for P23 million.

In a disclosure, First Abacus yesterday informed the Philippine Stock Exchange that it sold 14 million shares equivalent to 100 percent of Faimi to local firm Emergent Financial Holdings Corp. at P1.64 a share.

First Abacus said it would use proceeds of the sale as additional working capital.

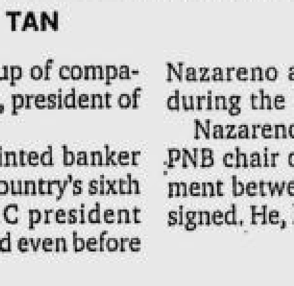
Faimi is the investment manager and principal distributor of the shares of equity mutual fund Abacus Growth Fund Inc., which was incorporated in 1996 with an authorized capital stock of P30 million.

First Abacus was formerly the Seven Seas Oil Exploration and Resources Inc., a company originally engaged in oil exploration and development.

In 1996, the shareholders of Seven Seas agreed to transform the company into an investment holding firm and changed the corporate name to First Abacus.

The first move was to acquire Abacus Capital and Investment Corp. that, in turn, owned Abacus Securities Corp., one of the country's largest local stockbrokerages, and real estate firm Vista Holdings Corp.

PNB names Tan as new prexy, CEO



TAN

THE PHILIPPINE National Bank yesterday formally appointed banker Lorenzo Tan as its new president and chief executive, replacing Feliciano Miranda, a nominee of tobacco magnate Lucio Tan.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, PNB corporate secretary Cecilia Pesayco also announced that Miranda would remain as a member of the 11-member PNB board.

Tan was president of United Coconut Planters Bank until the government again took over management control of the bank.

Tan had worked with Citibank NA and the Guoco group of companies. He is brother of Nestor Tan, president of Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

The PNB board earlier appointed banker Francisco Dizon as chair of the country's sixth largest lender, replacing PDIC president Norberto Nazareno, who resigned even before his term expired due to health reasons.

Dizon is a former president of Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. His father Arsenio was president of PNB during the administration of the late President Diosdado Macapagal.

The bank decided to accept the resignation of Nazareno, who had undergone a heart bypass two weeks ago.

Nazareno was elected chair of PNB in May 2001 after the Lucio Tan group agreed to convert part of the bank's P25-billion debt into government equity.

Given his responsibilities as president of Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., Nazareno agreed to take on the role only during the transition period.

Nazareno was scheduled to step down as PNB chair once the memorandum of agreement between Tan and the government was signed. He, however, will stay director of PNB.

Doris C. Dumlao

DISCLOSURES

BACNOTAN Consolidated Industries Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 19, 3 p.m. at the Skytop of Hotel Intercontinental, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of March 20 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

ALLIANCE Global Group Inc. created the office of assistant secretary and appointed Renato Piezas to the position.

* * *

STENIEL Manufacturing Corp. moved its annual stockholders' meeting to May 17.

* * *

SANITARY Wares Manufacturing Corp. denied having any knowledge that could explain the unusual movement in the price of its shares except for its reported P98-million loss for 2001 presented to stockholders during its annual meeting last March 19.

* * *

ABOITIZ Equity Ventures Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 13, 4 p.m. at the Ballroom I of City Sports Club Cebu. For those who cannot attend its Cebu meeting, a stockholders' briefing will be held in Manila on May 16, 3 p.m. at the Rizal Ballroom C of Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

* * *

WISE Holdings Inc. moved its annual stockholders' meeting from May 27 to July 31. *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, April 10, 2002)

STOCK	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5	5	5	5	1,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	67.5	67.5	66.5	67	232,100
China Banking Corp.	615	615	615	615	2,480
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	1,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	41	41	38.5	40.5	1,077,400
Global Business Bank Inc	75	80	75	80	300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	42.5	42.5	41.5	42	467,000
Philippine National Bank	62.5	62.5	60	60	7,900
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	1,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.25	23.25	23	23	23,200
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	130,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	230	230	230	230	400
Manulife Financial Corp.	1340	1340	1340	1340	10
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	50,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1090	1095	1090	1095	2,720
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	36	36	35.5	35.5	3,700
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.65	0.65	3,870,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	820	820	805	810	49,280
Ipeople Inc.	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	40,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	900,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	30,000
Piltel	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	6,770,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	110,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	550	555	540	545	111,680
Ivantage Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.5	180,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.02	12,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	31	31	30.5	30.5	12,300
Manila Electric Co. B	47	48	47	47.5	1,240,800
Petron Corp.	1.72	1.74	1.7	1.74	2,180,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.86	1.86	1.8	1.84	1,128,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	50,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.6	2.75	2.6	2.75	2,469,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	10,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	50,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5	5	5	5	3,000
Sanitary Wares Mfg. Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	600,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	40,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	50,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13	13	13	13	1,647,000
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	22.25	22.25	21.5	22	296,400
RFM Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.46	1.46	1,036,000
San Miguel Corp. A	48	48	47.5	47.5	100,800
San Miguel Corp. B	61.5	61.5	61	61	85,300
Universal Robina Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	26,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	110,000
Ayala Corp.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.3	2,870,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2	2.02	2	2.02	1,183,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.62	0.62	0.61	0.61	220,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	90,000
APC Group Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	150,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	55,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.9	2.9	62,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	180,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	9.5	9.5	6,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.73	0.74	9,910,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	400,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	910,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.095	0.095	0.085	0.085	2,300,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.26	1.32	1.24	1.32	2,117,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	31	31	31	31	156,700
Global Equities Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.125	0.125	850,000
Ionics Inc.	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	45,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.8	1.8	555,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	15,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.85	0.87	0.84	0.87	720,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	600,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.55	0.6	0.55	0.6	400,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	6,240,000
Music Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	30,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	600,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.89	0.89	0.89	0.89	50,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	510,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	200,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	5,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	200,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	5,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	200,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.25	3,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.59	0.59	17,030,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	30,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	60,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.18	0.18	600,000
Philippine Racing Club	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	10,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	37	37	36	36	109,900
DMCI Holdings Inc.-Pref.	770	770	765	765	18,330
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	10,000
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	790	790	790	790	5,430
Jollibee Warrants	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	1,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	410,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	7,200
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1	12,308,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	50,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	950,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	2,860,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	1,080,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	12,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.38	2.5	2.38	2.5	21,832,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	10,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	400,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	1,713,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	60,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.046	0.049	0.046	0.048	18,400,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	100,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.235	0.235	0.225	0.225	1,430,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	40,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	100,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	5,000,000
Interport Res.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	5,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	4,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	7,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	10,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	200,000

CURRENCIES

April 10, 2002 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.135074	1.000000	51.0420
Japan	Yen	0.008666	0.007635	0.3897
United Kingdom	Pound	1.631555	1.437400	73.3678
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.145530	0.128212	6.5442
Switzerland	Franc	0.681644	0.600528	30.6522
Canada	Dollar	0.711244	0.626606	31.9832
Singapore	Dollar	0.618569	0.544959	27.8158
Australia	Dollar	0.598667	0.527426	26.9209
Bahrain	Dinar	3.010966	2.652661	135.3971
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.302679	0.266660	13.6109
Brunei	Dollar	0.617056	0.543626	27.7478
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000118	0.000104	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.026100	0.022994	1.1737
UAE	Dirham	0.309049	0.272272	13.8973
Korea	Won	0.000860	0.000758	0.0387
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.881000	44.9680
Brazil	Real	0.496967	0.437828	22.3476
Denmark	Kroner	0.134528	0.118519	6.0494
India	Rupee	0.023250	0.020483	1.0455
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.298704	0.263158	13.4321
Mexico	New Peso	0.125756	0.110791	5.6550
New Zealand	Dollar	0.493082	0.434405	22.1729
Norway	Kroner	0.130713	0.115158	5.8779
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018934	0.016681	0.8514
South Africa	Rand	0.101075	0.089047	4.5451
Sweden	Kroner	0.109731	0.096673	4.9344
Syria	Pound	0.022040	0.019417	0.9911
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.032543	0.028670	1.4634
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001261	0.001111	0.0567

Economists see US GDP up 4.5% in Q1

WASHINGTON—Over the past month, private economists have nearly doubled their projection for the US economy's growth rate in the first quarter of this year.

The closely watched Blue Chip Economic Indicators consensus forecast for gross domestic product in the January to March period rose to 4.5 percent in the April survey. Only one month ago, the consensus projected first-quarter growth of 2.6 percent.

"Consensus forecasts of US economic activity this year shot upward for a third consecutive month in April as analysts continued to react to a fairly steady stream of stronger-than-expected economic reports," the Kansas City, Mo.-based Blue Chip newsletter said in a summary of the latest survey.

"It's now the consensus of our panel members that real GDP grew at an annual rate of 4.5 percent in Q1, the fastest advance since Q2 of 2000," the newsletter said.

The consensus forecast for 2002 GDP growth increased to 2.6 percent in April from 2 percent in March.

Restocking of depleted inventories was expected to be a big driving force behind the first quarter's growth, contributing about three percentage points, Blue Chip said.

The economists projected that consumer spending would advance solidly, and that business spending on new equipment and software would contribute positively to growth for the first time since the third quarter of 2000.

Reuters

Global economic slowdown more of the same, says IMF

WASHINGTON—Despite all the fretting about a new style of synchronized world slowdown, the global economy is actually on a well-worn path dating back to the 1890s, the IMF said Tuesday.

Seeking to put the global deceleration in context, the International Monetary Fund analysis scotches many widely held beliefs about the unique nature of the current cycle.

"Contrary to the impression one gets from much of the public discussion, the tendency of recessions in one country to occur at the same time as recessions in other countries—synchronization—has been a persistent feature of the historical record," it said.

The IMF analysis is contained within its World Economic Outlook, a report scheduled for release in its entirety on April 18, two days before a semi-annual gathering here of the IMF and World Bank.

The IMF released the analytical section in advance, saying it was frustrated that months of scholarly work in the semi-annual report were often skipped over by journalists.

The report's highlight—the latest IMF world economic growth forecasts—remains under wraps.

But the analysis does shed a new historical light on the nature of the worldwide slowdown, which some commentators have described as being of a unique, globalized nature.

"Since the late 19th century, most recessions have been synchronized," the IMF said.

Before World War I, the global economy turned down in the early 1890s, the early 1900s and 1907-8; between the wars it headed south again in 1920-21 and the Great Depression of 1929-1933.

And in recent decades, the world suffered widespread slowdowns in the mid-1970s, the early 1980s and the early 1990s.

In fact, recessions were becoming more synchronized over time, it said.

IMF experts—James Morsink, Thomas Helbing and Stephen Tokarick—also scoffed at suggestions that the key role played by shrinking investment in the current slowdown marked a return to 19th-century style recessions.

"The role of investment in recessions has, if anything, increased over time," their report said.

Almost all recessions since 1972 had been accompanied by a contraction in investment, compared with about 60 percent before World War II, the analysis said.

Over the same time period, deflation had almost been eradicated from the modern economic map, it said.

"About 40 percent of recessions before World War II were accompanied by deflation but only one—Japan in the late 1990s—since then," the IMF said.

AFP

Creditor banks settle issues on Daewoo sale

SEOUL, South Korea—Creditor banks of Daewoo Motor Co. have settled key differences that have slowed down a takeover bid by US auto giant General Motors Corp., an official at one bank said Wednesday.

"We have reached a broad agreement with GM," said Chung Kun-young, head of Daewoo's main creditor, state-run Korea Development Bank.

Chung told a news conference the banks will sign a formal deal with GM after negotiators from both sides complete technicalities.

GM signed a preliminary deal in September to take over debt-ridden Daewoo for $1.2 billion and had hoped to finalize the sale by the end of last year. But negotiations dragged on over several points, including indemnity for additional debts that might be found in the future.

The acquisition would give GM—which is headquartered in Detroit, Michigan—production bases in Asia, the world's fastest growing auto market.

However, GM is reportedly worried that Daewoo's debts may be bigger than the current estimate of $17 billion.

A breakthrough came when the banks promised to pay as much as $297 million for additional debts that might surface during the next five years, Chung said.

South Korean creditors also agreed to provide a $750-million loan with a 6-percent annual interest to a GM affiliate that is to be established to run Daewoo, he said.

AP

Singaporean economy contracts in Q1

SINGAPORE—Singapore's gross domestic product contracted 2.6 percent in the first quarter of 2002, compared with the same period last year, the Ministry of Trade and Industry said in an advance estimate issued Wednesday.

This trade-dependent island nation is currently battling one of the worst recessions in its 36-year history. However, the government predicts the economy will return to growth—between one percent and 3 percent—this year.

Goods-producing industries, comprising the manufacturing and construction sectors, contracted by 6.1 percent in the first quarter of 2002, compared with 2.8-percent growth during the same period last year.

"This was largely due to a decline in the manufacturing sector as a result of sluggish demand for electronics. The construction sector also contracted further due to the weak property market," the ministry said.

The services-industries sector contracted by 0.7 percent in the first quarter, compared with 5.7-percent growth in the first quarter of 2001, the ministry said.

AP

Sun sees Microsoft .NET monopoly

WASHINGTON—A Sun Microsystems Inc. executive warned a federal judge on Tuesday that archrival Microsoft Corp. could use its .NET Web-based services strategy to thwart competition and extend its monopoly power to the Internet.

Sun's chief strategy officer, Jonathan Schwartz, said that unless tough antitrust restrictions are imposed on Microsoft, it can use its Windows operating system monopoly and dominant Internet Explorer Web browser to promote .NET over competitors like Sun's Java programming language.

"The Internet is largely built on open standards, but Microsoft's control of the ubiquitous operating system combined with its ownership of the dominant browser and promotion of .NET Passport means that it could lock end-users in to a Microsoft-controlled world," Schwartz said in written testimony to US District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly.

The judge turned down a Microsoft request that she throw out Schwartz's testimony about Web services because it was based on predictions of future Microsoft behavior.

Reuters

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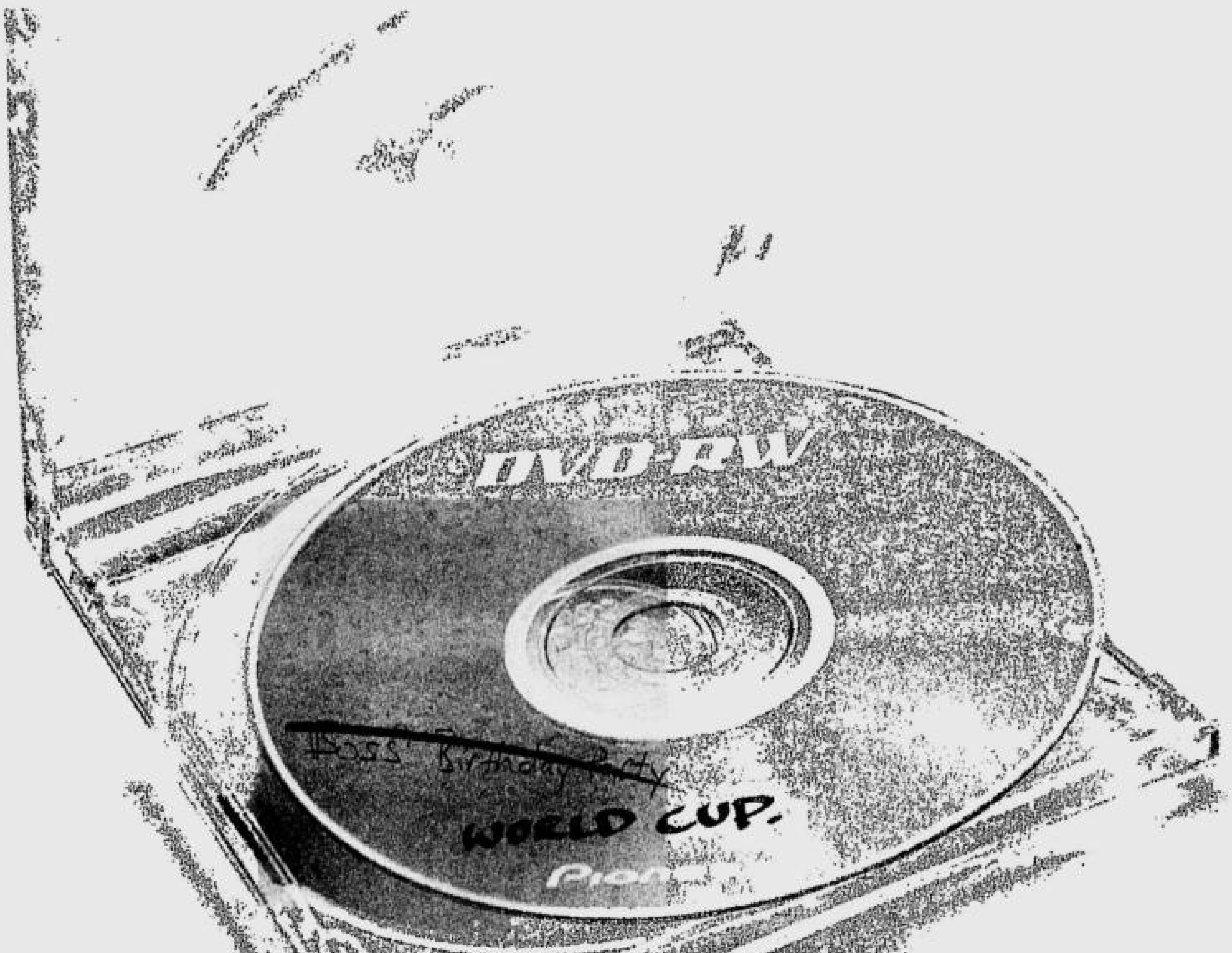

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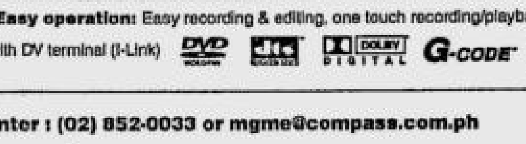
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2BR 2TB NR. MKT CHURCH SCHool PROJ.8 Q.C. 9279844 / 4542047

HOUSE

PARANAQUE

MGV Pque 2sty 5BR4TB w/ phone CP09195546815 Didi

QUEZON CITY

2BR NR ATENEO 7T 6819727

MAKATI

SANLO DUPLEX 5268048

SAN JUAN

GHILLS 3BR Bung Spool Fcing E P70K Call 723-2391

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MAKATI

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KWOOD Mktl 3BR3TB maid qr 20T prkg 2.5T 8996632 Irene

PASIG

•EMERALD MANSION 3BR FF 50T Hi-Floor V.Nice 4121825

QUEZON CITY

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BEDSPACE

5Male 5105011 0917-8499749

BEDSPACER Mkt 09187082177

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BUSINESS RENTAL

524 EDSA KAL 3FLRS 3612663

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movimondo

MOVIMONDO - Italy is implementing a project funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) entitled: "Relief and Humanitarian Operations in Support of the Returnees, Displaced by the Insurgency in the Province of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur, Mindanao, the Philippines:"

PROJECT N°ECHO/PHL/210/2001/01001
PROCUREMENT NOTICE MP 1002-2002

INVITATION TO BID FOR

- Agricultural Inputs
- Agricultural Implements

TENDER DOCUMENTS

The tender dossier is available for collection at following mail address:

MOVIMONDO, P.O. Box # 13117
GSIS Post Office,
Carmen 9000 Cagayan de Oro City

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

April 19th, 2002 at 12:00 am. Any tender received after this deadline will not be considered.

TENDER OPENING SESSION

On April 26th, 2002 at 12:00 am at Movimondo Field Office, Poblacion, Bacolod, Lanao del Norte- 9205 Philippines Cell :0916-4399283 / 0917-7416322
E mail :moviphil@yahoo.it
From March 21, 2002.

For purpose of securing a copy of the bidding requirements, please write us at the address' MOVIMONDO Field Office, Poblacion, Bacolod, Lanao del Norte- 9205 Philippines; Email: moviphil@yahoo.it

(Sgd.) ENRICO CAMPIGLIA
Project Coordinator

(PDI - March 21, 28, Apr. 4 & 11, 2002)

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

BUSINESS RENTAL

PRESTIGE TWR 97m²&150m² All Bnew 4121825 09177914366

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
PROVINCIAL AGRARIAN REFORM OFFICE
San Sebastian St., Dawis
Bacolod City 6100
Tel. Nos. 433-8124, 433-8130, 435-1680
Fax Nos. 433-8123, 433-8129

March 13, 2002

NOTICE OF COVERAGE FOR THE LAND OF NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

Notice of Coverage is hereby given to:

	LANDOWNER	TITLE	LOT. NO.	AREA (has.)	LOCATION
1.	Malibu Agro/Corporation	T-3491	307	5.9556	La Carlota City
2.	Emilio Abello	T-39782	1295	43.7316	Moises Padilla
3.	Dr. Ma. Albina Ruffy/ Mariquita Ruffy & Dr. Mauro Ruffy	T-67032	946	35.9473	Moises Padilla
4.	Hrs. of the Late Ricardo Tolosa/ PNB	T-184221	312-A	23.0050	Moises Padilla
5.	Enrique Bugarin	T-48592	708-B	89.8134	Murcia
6.	Enieda Enrique/PNB-Binalbagan	T-38194	H-203988/1645	20.0426	Isabela
7.	Enrique Montilla, Jr., Et. Al.	T-64516	1374-A	18.8833	Isabela
8.	Lizares-Lopez Development Corporation	T-195132	599-B-4	80.7103	Sagay City
9.	Lizares-Lopez Development Corporation	T-31164	940-B	8.9964	Sagay City
10.	Mulawin Realty Corp.	T-160193	542	18.8170	Sagay City
11.	Mulawin Realty Corp.	T-160199	1373	4.4894	Sagay City
12.	Mulawin Realty Corp.	T-160200	914	1.2448	Sagay City
13.	Lanatan Agro-Industrial Corp.	T-160188	558-C	71.4442	Sagay City
14.	Lanatan Agro-Industrial Corp.	T-160189	567	29.4584	Sagay City
15.	Nicolas Armen Jalandoni	RT-101	863	85.0736	Silay City
16.	Nicolas Armen Jalandoni	RT-104	857	14.7577	Silay City
17.	Nicolas Armen Jalandoni	RT-105	856	2.1380	Silay City
18.	Luis Lacson	T-77118	551-A	37.3478	Talisay City
19.	Luis Lacson	T-77119	1191-A	15.5761	Talisay City
20.	Luis Lacson	T-77120	769-A	18.4166	Talisay City
21.	Gerald Y. Sian	T-24329	456-A-1-A-3	6.4894	Bago City
22.	Micheal Andrew Y. Sian	T-24273	456-A-1-B-1	6.7143	Bago City
23.	Jelly Panes/Planters Product, Inc.	P-6824	18	8.8414	Candoni
24.	Jusita Panes/Planters Product, Inc.	T-6821	8	9.1058	Candoni
25.	Planters Product, Inc.	T-122576	406-A	15.7561	Murcia
26.	TRIAL AGRICULTURAL	T-147184	634-A	34.7550	Murcia
27.	Teresita O. Lizares	T-122588	548-A	2.6020	Murcia
28.	Teresita O. Lizares	T-122587	112-C	38.0760	Murcia
29.	Teresita O. Lizares	T-122591	112-D	5.9739	Murcia
30.	Ramon Lizares	T-122589	548-B	14.5499	Murcia
31.	Enrique Lizares	T-122593	113	0.6631	Murcia
32.	Enrique Lizares	T-122585	112-A	24.7927	Murcia
33.	Enrique Lizares	T-122590	548-C	9.9701	Murcia
34.	Ramon Lizares	T-122586	112-B	28.7520	Murcia
35.	Salvador M. Rigor	T-3996	3024	16.3086	San Carlos City

Pursuant to Section 7 of R.A. 6557, you are hereby notified that your landholdings listed above are now covered under Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

In view thereof, may we invite you to a meeting anytime 10 days after publication of this notice at the MUNICIPAL AGRARIAN REFORM OFFICE, where the property is located and other matters, pertaining to the coverage.

You are further informed of your right to select and retain an area in accordance with Section 6 R.A. 6657, which should be more or less contiguous. Failure to appear on the said meeting or choose your retained area will mean, that you are leaving to us the discretion of the same.

As per E.O. 405, dated June 14, 1990 we will request Land Bank of the Philippines to determine the value of the land acquired, pursuant to Section 17 of R.A. 6657. Thereafter, we shall advise you of the valuation of your property through a Notice of Land Valuation, as soon as we receive LBP's Memorandum of Valuation.

We anticipate your presence and cooperation.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) ALEXIS M. ARSENAL
ARDO/Concurrent PARO II

(PDI - April 11, 2002)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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★Ofc Staff 9134470 CUNETA★

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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INQUIRER TRiViA
By BONG BARRAMEDA

Fiery end

A *holocaust* is a great destruction and loss of life: *the threat of a nuclear holocaust.* Often written with a capital letter, the *Holocaust* stands for the murder of European Jews by the Nazis during World War II. A *holocaust* was originally a pagan sacrificial offering that was consumed by fire—a whole burnt offering, the word derived from the Greek *holokaustos,* "burnt whole," from Greek *holos* ("whole") and *kaustos* ("burnt"). From this developed a more general (and now archaic) sense of sacrifice and later, separately, the sense of a massacre or slaughter, especially by fire.

For the Record. In 1209, in the bloody Crusade against the Albigenses (a religious sect in France suppressed for heresy), the French army raided the town of Beziers, near the Mediterranean coast. However, the question arose as to how to tell which of the town's inhabitants were heretics and which were good Christians. The commanding officer offered an easy solution: "Kill them all," he said, "for the Lord will know his own." And so several tens of thousands of men, women and children were killed.

Past Forward. This day in 1969: Radio Veritas was inaugurated at the Pope Pius XII Center in Ermita, Manila, as the first Catholic radio station in Southeast Asia.

WORD WATCH

Huramentado : from the Spanish *juramentado,* "bound by an oath."

PDI -- April 11, 2002

PUBLIC NOTICES

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PUBLIC NOTICES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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LEGAL NOTICE

The estate of Filomeno Bajar, Sr. had been extrajudicially settled among his heirs per Doc. No. 63, Page No. 14 Book No. V, Series of 2002 of Notary Public Jimmy Lacebal of Mandaluyong City dated March 25, 2002 (PDI April 4, 11 & 18, 2002)

PUBLIC NOTICES

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit thou who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue, want to thank You for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You, no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your Perpetual Glory. Amen.

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OBITUARIES

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Monday to Sunday
12:00 noon
Day before publication

"When I call out to the Lord, he answers me from his holy mountain.
When I lie down in sleep, I wake again, for the Lord sustains me."
Psalm 3.11

In Loving Memory
On the Eleventh Death Anniversary of

Constancia I. Taduran

who passed away on 11 April 1991
and
The Seventh Death Anniversary of

Concepcion I. Taduran

who passed away on 13 April 1995

Holy Masses will be offered on 11 and 13 April at the following churches:

6:00 AM	Parish of the Presentation of the Child Jesus, BF Homes Parañaque
6:00 AM	Parish of the Divine Healer, Tahanan Village
6:30 AM	Parish of the Resurrection, BF Homes Parañaque
12:15 PM	Parish of Our Lady of EDSA
12:15 PM	Chapel of the Eucharistic Lord, SM Megamall

We request the pious reader to join us in our prayers
for the eternal repose of our beloved's soul.

In Loving Memory

on the First Death Anniversary of

DR. LELAND S. VILLADOLID

An expert in Internal Medicine, Thyroidology, Endocrinology and Nuclear Medicine
Undersecretary of the Department of Science and Technology (1986-1988)

Who died in the Grace of our Lord on April 11, 2001.

Holy Masses will be offered today, Thursday, April 11, 2002 at the following

Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City	6:00 p.m.
St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Timog, Quezon City	7:00 a.m.
Makati Medical Center Chapel, Makati City	4:00 p.m.
Colegio de San Agustin Chapel, Dasmariñas Village, Makati	7:00 a.m.
Sacred Heart Church, Dao, Makati City	6:00 a.m.
St. Joseph Cathedral, Alaminos, Pangasinan	5:00 p.m.

His loving wife **Ming**; loving children **Connie** and **Mulo, Vicky** and **Don, Leland Jr.** and **Marivic, Paul, Katrina** and **Ito**; grandchildren **Bianca, Jason, Javi, Nico** and **Pocholo**; siblings and in-laws **Lydia** and **Felix Sibal, Oscar** and **Alice Villadolid, Doy** and **Naty Villadolid, Purita** and **Pelayo Perez(†)**, **Norma** and **Celso Reinoso**; relatives and friends request you to remember him in your prayers.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord" 2 Corinthians 5:8

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

Happy are those who have died in the Lord;
let them rest from their labors for their good
deeds go with them *Rev. 14:13*

ERMELINDA MATA-AQUINO

Died at the Grace of our Lord
on April 7, 2002 at the age of 56.

Her bereaved husband **Renato**; children **Jonathan** and **Jesusa, Elmer, Rosalyn** and **Angelito Jr., Mary Grace**; grandchildren **Karell, Arvin Jose, Patrick Jaime, Kathleen Maria** and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel 14, La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Friday, April 12, 2002 at the North Cemetery after the 7:30 a.m. Holy Mass.

ADELAIDA LAPUZ HERNANDEZ

Beloved sister of **Prof. José David Lapuz**

Peacefully joined our Creator
on April 9, 2002 at the age of 86.

Her remains lie in state at
Loyola Memorial Chapels, Edsa corner
Bernardino, Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City.

Interment will be announced later.

"My soul finds rest in God alone;
my salvation comes from Him;
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
He is my fortress, I will never be shaken."
Psalm 62:1

LYDIA MANA-AY de la CRUZ

Peacefully joined her Creator
on April 9, 2002 at the age of 71.

Her bereaved husband **ZOILO, JR**; children, children-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren **JESS, LINUS, ROLAND, SUSAN, ANNIE, GING, ANGELIQUE, CHRISTIAN, LIANNE, PHILIPPE, MICHELLE, KARLA, IVAN, THERESE, PATRICK, JAMIE, ALLIAH & MILES**; sisters, nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Don Bosco Church, Pasay Road, Makati City.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 14, 2002 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 2:00 PM Mass at the Don Bosco Church.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

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Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City; Tels. 231-0721; 231-3192
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Tels. 826-1376; 826-9882; (0915) 712-1220
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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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So Lovingly Remembered and Sadly Missed

On the First Death Anniversary of

ERNESTO "NITOY" R. RIBARGOSO

who joined our Creator on April 12, 2001

In Memoriam Holy Masses will be offered tomorrow April 12, 2002
at the following churches:

Sanctuario del Sto. Cristo, Kabayanan, San Juan	7:00 a.m.
Mount Carmel Shrine, Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
St. John the Baptist Parish, Pinaglabanan, San Juan	7:15 a.m.
Shrine of Divine Mercy, Mandaluyong City	6:00 a.m.
Cardinal Santos Hospital Chapel, Greenhills, San Juan	5:15 p.m.
St. Francis Church, Mandaluyong City	6:00 p.m.
Sta. Rosa de Lima, Pasig City	6:00 p.m.
Immaculate Conception Parish, Pasig City	12:15 p.m.
San Sebastian Church, Quiapo, Manila	7:00 a.m.
Christ the King, Greenmeadows, Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
Center for Peace Asia Foundation, Mandaluyong City	12:15 p.m.
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Tagaytay City	6:00 a.m.
St. Paul Metropolitan Cathedral, Vigan, Ilocos Sur	5:00 p.m.
Parokya ng Immaculada Concepcion, Antipolo City	8:00 a.m.
St. Thomas the Apostle, Tsing Yi, Hongkong	7:15 a.m.
Rosary Church, Tsim Sha Tsui, Hongkong	8:00 a.m.
St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City	7:00 a.m.
Christ the King Church, Los Angeles, California	8:00 a.m.
St. Kevin Church, Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles	8:00 a.m.
St. Julian's Peter Catholic Church, Sydney, Australia	1:10 p.m.
San Silvestre de Capiti, Roma, Italy	12:00 p.m.

His wife **LITA**; children **Ambet & Ricky, Marissa & Boy, Bobby & Ina, Jon-Jon, Lilith & Dave**; grandchildren **Paolo, Carlo, Nicole, Michelle, Gino, Princess, Chesca, Macky, Bea, Micah & Trina**; mother **Teresa**, request relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

JOSE M. ACUÑA

of Alabat, Quezon and Binalonan, Pangasinan

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on April 6, 2002 at the age of 78.

His bereaved wife **Eming**; daughters and in-laws **Maritess & Nick dela Cruz, Yoly & Deo Contreras, Anabelle & Raymond Soria** and **Elsa & Razmon Cruz**; grandchildren; brother **Luis**; and sister **Nita**; and other relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Chapel A, La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 14, 2002 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 9:00 AM Mass at Funeraria Paz.

Our Dearly Beloved

CHARITO 'Chit' FALSIS BARTOLOME

Peacefully joined her Creator and now rests in grace
May 19, 1951 - April 9, 2002

We, husband **Andy**, children **Arman & Kitty**, mother **Rosalia Falsis**, brothers **Tom & Nonoy Falsis**, sisters **Celia Reynales, Felipa Venus & Cathy Careng**, nieces, nephews, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at St. Alphonsus de Liguori Church, Chapel 2, Magallanes Village, Makati City. Her body will be cremated at Manila Memorial Park Crematory on April 13, 2002 at 11:00 AM.

We remember and pray for

PIERRE RAMON G. ONGSIAKO

who was born to eternal life on April 11, 1999
Holy Masses will be said on April 11, 2002 as follows:

Church of the Holy Sacrifice, University of the Philippines	6:00 a.m., 12:00 nn, 6:00 p.m.
Sta. Maria della Strada, Katipunan Road, Quezon City	6:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m.
Shrine of Mount Carmel, New Manila, Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
St. Nicolas de Tolentino Cathedral, Cabanatuan City	6:00 p.m.
Cathedral of St. Sebastian, Lipa City	5:00 a.m., 6:00 a.m., 7:00 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 5:15 p.m.
St. Paul Metropolitan Cathedral, Vigan, Ilocos Sur	5:30 a.m., 6:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m.

and at the gravesite of the
Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City
9:00 a.m.

People, Events & Products

Aries Espinosa, Editor
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Citibank to recognize top business journalists

IN A BID to encourage excellent business journalism, Citibank NA has announced the search for the recipient of the Citi Journalistic Excellence Award for 2001.

Now on its 10th year, the Citi Journalistic Excellence Awards recognizes Filipino business journalists who write well-researched feature articles on trade, banking and finance, the economy, and other business issues. Through the contest, Citibank hopes to help promote and reward quality business reporting in the Philippines.

Citibank public affairs officer Lillibeth Fajardo says that Citibank continues to hold the awards because the bank believes that "informed reporting on business, economic and financial issues creates a more educated public and helps promote a better business climate as well."

The Citibank tilt is open to business feature stories published in any of the national dailies between Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2001. A year-long monitoring system was employed to keep track of possible entries to the contest.

All articles must be by-lined, written in English and have a minimum length of 750 words. Articles may be single stories or part of a series. To qualify, journalists must have published at least two articles that meet the program's requirements.

Entries will be judged based on originality of thinking, introduction of new ideas and concepts, reporter's analysis and understanding of issues, use of research and interviews, and the impact of the article on the readers.

An independent panel of judges composed of business, government, and media personalities, including a representative from the Columbia Graduate School of

Journalism, will evaluate the entries. To ensure impartiality, judges will review articles that have been uniformly encoded by auditing firm Sycip, Gorres and Velayo.

Citibank will not have a representative in the judging committee.

Citibank will announce the winners in May. The grand prize awardee will travel to New York to participate in a 10-day business and financial seminar administered by the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism under the auspices of Citigroup.

Joining an elite group of 19 other journalists from around the world, the Philippine winner will attend a series of workshops on economic issues and principles of accounting and finance, engage in discussions with senior academicians and policymakers, and visit key financial institutions including the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Bloomberg Business News, the New York Stock Exchange, and the State Department.

The Citi Journalistic Excellence Award has, since 1992, recognized over 200 business journalists from over a hundred media outlets in 30 countries including Australia, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand.

ASIA'S NO. 1 WATER & WASTEWAT SOLUTIONS NT
W 2002

UNILEVER'S WATER MANAGEMENT AWARD

Unilever Philippines, a leading manufacturer of home and personal care products, was awarded the Asia Water Management Excellence Award (industry category) at the Water 2002 Expo held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia recently. Jointly organized by the Regional Institute of Environmental Technology and AMB Exhibitions, the Asia Water Management Excellence Award aims at recognizing the significant contributions made by individuals, government and private organizations in furthering management excellence and best practice in the water sector in Asia. Unilever Philippines was awarded for its 'remarkable contribution to clean water stewardship and conservation with its projects for the Pasig River and Laguna de Bay.' Shown (from left) is Taej Mundkur, executive director, Wetlands International, Tan Sri Rozali Ismail, chair, Puncak Niaga Holdings, YB Dato Seri S. Samy Vellu (Minister of Works, Malaysia, Chito Macapagal, GM-corporate development of Unilever Philippines, and Nien-Ho Ma, Environmental Protection Administration.

WELCOME PARTY

ADD Group of Companies board chair Jacques Dupasquier (center) and ADD International Services Inc. president Emile Quijano (left) recently led the cocktail reception to formally welcome representatives from 14 of the United Kingdom's noted hospitals and medical institutions who participated in Medex, a three-day nursing recruitment event organized by ADD International and Drake International in Hotel Intercontinental Manila. Over 500 nurses were hired during the medical exposition. ADD International is the country's number one provider to the UK National Health Service Trust and was awarded with a special citation by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration for developing the UK market for Filipino healthcare professionals. Medex was supported by BPI, Cathay Pacific, FedEx, Filinvest Land Inc., Philam Life, PLDT Touch Card and Tour Spectrum Inc. Also shown are (from left) ADD operations manager Carol Cezar, ADD human resource officer Maricris Adregado and ADD chief finance officer lawyer Eugene Mateo.

Shell launches heavy-duty diesel engine oils

PILIPINAS SHELL recently launched the new Shell Rimula family of heavy-duty diesel engine oils to meet the needs of the new millennium motorist, using highly efficient and up-to-date diesel oil technology.

The new Shell Rimula diesel engine oils have a new and improved formulation that was developed to deliver value-added performance in diesel engine lubrication and protection. The Rimula Super and premium-protection Rimula X, complemented by quality oils Rimula D and J, take heavy-duty diesel engine lubrication to new levels of performance.

The new Shell Rimula was formulated with the consumers in mind. It specifically addresses the needs of trucks, buses, and other heavy-duty vehicles for the right engine lubrication solutions. Such vehicles are used by various companies and individuals for public utility, and cargo delivery.

Shell's commercial transport marketing manager Jojo V. Lopez explained that the new diesel engine oils are particularly cost-effective, working to help vehicle owners and operators control maintenance costs and increase their profitability.

"Diesel engines work harder than gasoline. The diesel oil is subjected to the severest use daily, losing its ability to lubricate properly. It forms deposits and sludge, blocking the passageways or failing to pump properly on cold start-ups. New Shell Rimula is reformulated with diesel oil technology that provides exclusive protection and performance exclusively for diesel engines," Lopez added.

The new Shell Rimula has a longer capacity to combat combustion acids, resist water and stress. It also has a special diesel additive technology proven to deliver the following: longer Total Base Number (TBN) retention that combat acids produced by fuel combustion; excellent wear performance; high resistance to oil breakdown due to heat; and cleaner engine for better diesel engine performance.

Diesel engines can benefit greatly from the new Shell Rimula, the improved formulation of which exceeds API CH-4 standards, significantly better than the CG-4 and E2 oil it replaces, including that of competition, giving superior protection in today's heavy-duty application.

The new Shell Rimula easily passed tests using European, US and Japanese trucks in high and low sulphur environments, in extreme high temperatures, dusty conditions of deserts in the Middle East, in the heat and humidity of the tropics such as Thailand, in the rough, rugged outback roads of Australia, and also in countries with poor quality fuels.

Shell is the world's largest oil marketer, and with its global expertise and experience, combined with unique technological resources, it assures motorists of complete satisfaction in meeting the needs of their diesel engines in a way no other oil company can match.

CRISOL 'INFORMANCE'

The Assumption HS Family Council headed by Candy Ledesma, president, recently presented highly acclaimed tenor Edgardo Crisol in an 'informance' titled 'Shakespeare and the Musical Unconscious'. Crisol performed songs and delivered a lecture-performance tracing the beginnings of opera, from the Greek tragedies to the psalms and sonnets, the roving troubadours and Elizabethan Shakespeare and its evolution into Broadway shows and MTV. Together with selected students, Crisol delivered a moving performance from 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Hamlet', 'Julius Caesar' and 'Macbeth'. The 'informance' is produced by Musika Klasika Filipino, a non-stock, non-profit foundation which aims to bring opera classics to the Filipino masses. The group has scheduled a campus tour for 2002. For particulars, call lawyer Diane Franco, executive trustee, or Sita Corpuz, at 810-1490 or 810-9595.

BITS & Clips

Ethnic music for a cause

KINDERHILFE Philippines e.V., in cooperation with the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, is holding a cultural event featuring traditional music and dance on April 10, 7:30 p.m. at the RCBC Plaza in Makati City for the benefit of three foundations founded by Fr. Pierre Tritz, S.J. for socially disadvantaged children. Dubbed "Kaplilang-lilang" (Maguindanaoan term for entertainment), the event brings together four artists well-known for indigenous music, dance and performances using Kulintang and other indigenous musical instruments. For more information, call Weng Martinez, Leah Daep, Ana Moring, or Loida Grace Urbano at 564-1856, 564-2608, 564-1859, and 564-1774.

SMCC 4-day alumni homecoming

ALL ALUMNI of Sacred Heart College (now St. Mary's College) of Catbalogan, Samar, are invited to attend its grand alumni homecoming on April 12. HS Class '77, silver jubilarians and this year's host, promises a unique and exciting affair for all alumni. The class has adapted the theme "From the '70s...and Stayin' Alive." Dr. Lydia Zosa-Labro, homecoming chair, will spearhead a free medical and dental clinic at the school grounds on April 10 and food-giving to indigents on April 11. Other highlights of the four-day celebration are testimonial dinners for Class '78 and '52 on April 11, motorcade and grand alumni night on April 12, and a whole day of fun at the beach on April 13. Registration is ongoing at the SMCC grounds. For more details, call engineer Eloy Tan at 0918-3530296.

Health, R&R for the elderly

DR. CINDY Dollente Ang, president of the YWCA of Manila, announces the launching of the "Recreational and Physical Fitness Program for Women and Older Persons" on April 13, 1 p.m. at the YWCA of Manila Verandah Filomena, 1144 General Luna Street, Ermita, Manila. The program aims to promote quality of life for older persons through health education, leisure and recreation to counteract boredom and lack of activity and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Invited guests are Gary S. Sy, M.D., Lydia Buendia, M.D., and physical therapist Maria Armina B. Lagusa. Leisure activities in the program will be offered for free on the launch dayfor older persons through health education, leisure and recreation to counteract boredom and lack of activity and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Invited guests are Gary S. Sy, M.D., Lydia Buendia, M.D., and physical therapist Maria Armina B. Lagusa. Leisure activities in the program will be offered for free on the launch day.

Product FILES

MC Mountain home apartelle

DISCOVER the highland vacation within your reach, just 68.9 km south of Manila, MC Mountain Tourist Inn, Tagaytay, gives you not just a place to stay in but a holiday to spend with your friends and family. A privilege card membership is also offered for as low as P1,500++ for one year membership, and entitles a member to a free overnight stay on any day, plus a privilege discount. For inquiries, call the Manila office at 638-6360 to 62 or the apartelle site at (046)413-2232; (02)850-5438; 0917-7947500. MC Mountain Tourist Inn is at the km 68.9 mark of the Tagaytay-Nasugbu Highway, Buck Estate, Alfonso, Cavite.

COCOPLANS EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Cocoplans, UCPB Financial Services Group's pre-need company, recently awarded its most outstanding employee for 2001 in line with its human resources development strategy of giving recognition to exemplary performance. Adjudged 2001's most outstanding employee was Cielo A. Alon of the Cebu branch. Alon (center) is shown after receiving her trophy. She is flanked by Cocoplans officials led by lawyer Alfredo C. Tumacder, president (to her right); Caesar T. Michelena, SVP and general manager (to her left); Dario B. Martinez, first vice president, national sales and marketing (extreme right), and Myra Aguilar, HR manager (extreme left).

ACCREDITED PREMISE SC APPLICATOR

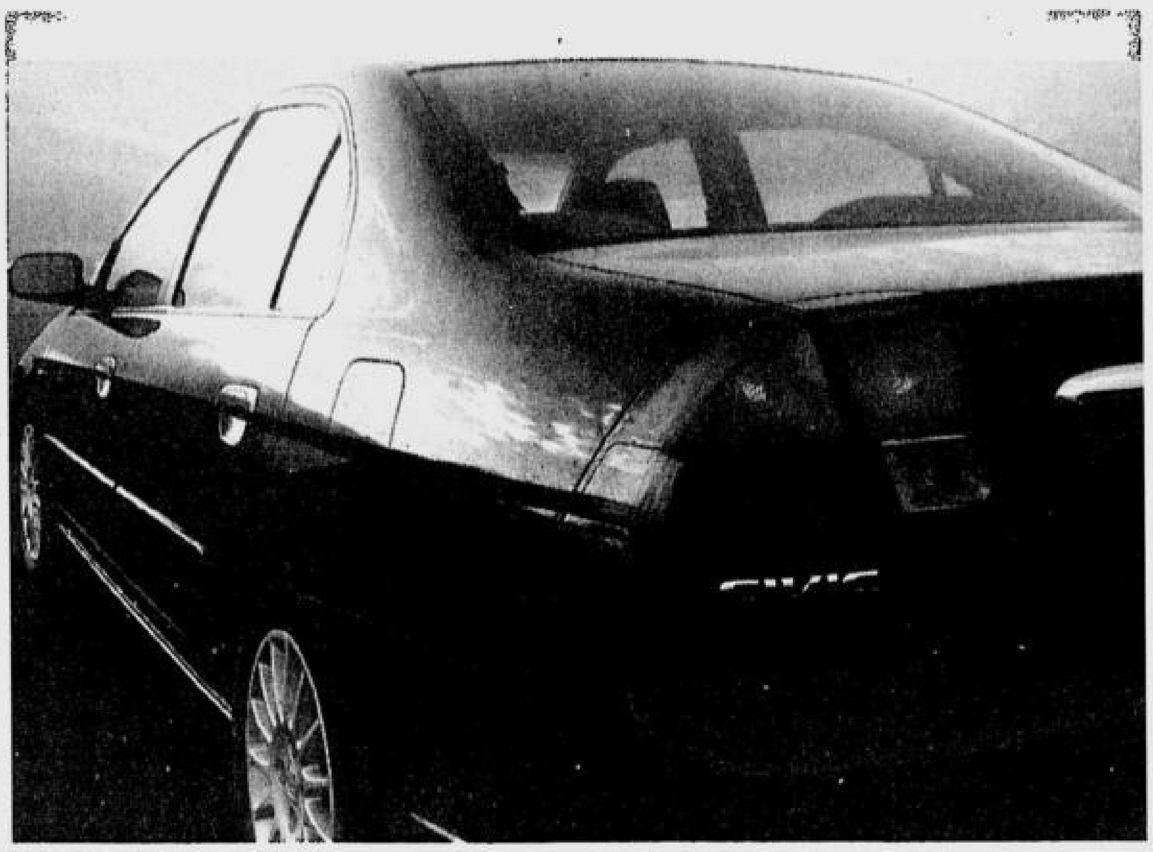
Pest-Away Exterminating was recently accredited as an applicator of Premise SC, the newest termite control system from Bayer, a leading name in home protection products all over the world. With this accreditation, Pest-Away clients can benefit from the superior exterminating capability of Premise SC. Termites exposed to high concentrations of Premise SC immediately die. Those that survive become confused and dysfunctional, unable to eat, and also eventually perish. Shown during the formal accreditation proceedings are (from left) Judith Gustilo, Pest-Away pest management supervisor; Jojo Dueñas, Bayer segment manager for environmental health; Jonathan David, Pest-Away general manager; Dr. Alberto Milani, Bayer general manager for animal health; Torsten Laubner, Bayer regional marketing manager; Graeme Smith, Bayer regional technical manager for Asia and Australia, and Jay Tolentino, Bayer technical coordinator for environmental health.

UST High '77 grand reunion

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY grand reunion of UST High School Batch 1977 will be held on April 20 Saturday, at the Isla Ballroom, Edsa Shangri-La Hotel at 4 p.m. The reunion invites other batches to attend as well. For more details and ticket reservations, call lawyer Bong Lopez at 0919-2391283, Aped Santos at 0917-9956753, Larry Aluning at 0916-3418008, Gerry Faypon at 0917-8308225, Dr. Elias Adamos at 712-0571, Jeff Delgado at 911-6433, Paeng Adriano at 0917-5205753, Ding Lim at 742-4741, Val M. Anjceto III at 0917-9442966, Dianne Asuncion-Villarosa at 912-6058 and 0917-9038393, and Letlet Basilio-Gloria at 0917-8307425.

New Honda Civic 'passes the bar'

By Tessa R. Salazar



HONDA Civic

AN ALERT and prepared cousin embarked on a career in law. Now, after hurdling the bar exams, his choice will forever add a prefix to his name.

Our family's new lawyer attributes his luck to the VTI-S, which he got to ride in the tense days before the bar results were released. Aside from being instantly smitten by it, he believed that it would be a perfect gift for bar passers. He got to ride the Civic again, during which he learned from a text message that he was in the list of successful bar examinees.

Finally, our cousin will be taking his oath at the end of April. He got his wish. As for his other wish to get a new Honda Civic as a gift, well, that can wait until he wins his first big case.

Suffice to say that for now he can cherish those wonderful moments he was in the 2002 Honda Civic, when he jumped and shouted for joy inside the spaciousness of the car. After all, there was enough space to celebrate. The headroom and legroom could comfortably fit five overweight adults.

My cousin, who sat at the middle of the back row, didn't notice the flat rear floor that allowed him to keep his feet planted firmly on the floor together. But I did, not only because of his jubilant stomping but also by what Honda said that it rerouted some underchassis components to get that middle bump out of the way.

Though he did lose sleep waiting for the passers' list, my cousin didn't lose weight. In fact, he seemed to occupy more space. That, I noticed too with the new Civic. Though it is physically more compact now, its overall length has been reduced by 15 mm and the front overhang cropped by 55 mm, its hip point has been increased by 25 mm and the rear leg room increased by 49 mm. The seat's side support, meanwhile, was increased by 20 mm while the cushion width was increased by 25 mm for better body support. It had also been designed with a shorter hood to make for a more compact overall length.

Noticeable, too, are the bigger instrumentation meters that would help the driver get quick gauge info at a glance. The wheels have bigger diameters than the previous Civic model, which brings about a more sporty appeal. The VTI-S now uses a 15-inch alloy wheel with a tire size of 185/65 R15.

'Perfectly legal'

When you're legal, you're safe. That's what my cousin, I'm sure, would try to say to me whenever I'd drive. So, here's loads of stuff for safety freaks. This Civic, aside from the standard antilock brake system, also employs the electronic brake force distribution that prevents rear wheel lock ups during abrupt stops. All of the new Civic's door is equipped with two steel-door beams that lend solid passenger protection in the event of a collision from either side.

The Civic boasts of a G-Force control technology that moderates the force of impact and helps maintain a survival zone around you and the passengers. It has high tension steel-body panels, front and rear crumple zones, steel-door beams and structural links that form a highly protective shell. Data from real and simulated accidents show that the G-force makes this Honda's hood, fender and wiper structures reduce the risk of pedestrian head injuries.

It has 3-point ELR seatbelts, pretensioners (that keeps the body firmly in place) and dual SRS airbags. The Civic, master of details, has even added a door handle within the trunk to allow easy escape should a curious child become locked inside.

The VTI-S retains its alertness and stability even while traversing U-turns, sharp curves and overtaking. Its 4-speed automatic transmission, though not the type that would shoot you up like a rocket on an impulse, has enough oomph for "tactical" city driving. I could go further, saying it's good for those who want the feel of a manual transmission but would love the easiness of AT. Its maximum power is 130 ps/6,600 rpm and a maximum torque of 14.9 kgm/5,000 rpm. It has an engine displacement of 1590.

Like my cousin, The 2002 Honda Civic passes the bar. Though I expected it to be a topnotcher in the looks department, the Civic plays it safe this time. Anyway, it's enough to make a new lawyer whoop it up.

IDRIVE CONTROL CENTER SHOWCASED

Prestige Cars Inc. (Libis) now showcases the new BMW 7 series—a vehicle that represents a departure into a new automotive era. This new benchmark in car design and technology features the "iDrive" control system. To demonstrate the ease of use of the iDrive system, Prestige Cars Inc. (Libis) offered customers a hands-on trial through the iDrive control center, located right inside the BMW showroom. BMW Phils. Corp. service director Gabor Csurgai is demonstrating the iDrive's unique functions to Sen. Vicente Sotto III, Prestine Cars Inc. (Libis) chair.

Keep your car 'cool' with Prestone

IN HEAVY traffic, an engine could produce enough heat to melt an average 200-pound engine block in 20 minutes. Regardless of the season, there is one safe high -operating temperature that provides optimum engine performance and the least engine wear. If this temperature is exceeded, then engine trouble causes more havoc to the car and the driver.

The solution, similar to human hot heads, is someone or something to "cool" things down.

This was why experts have invented the "coolant" whose specific job is to maintain the best operating temperature and reach it as quickly as possible.

Nowadays, cars have higher operating temperatures, because of air-conditioned, antipollution devices, automatic transmissions and increased engine cooling loads. Smaller cars also have high cooling loads because the engine has to work at a higher percentage of its capacity to power the car.

Answering these modern vehicle needs is a coolant brand that should be of superior quality. Today's trading in the Philippines is Prestone II Longlife Coolant Concentrate, which fights overheating, rust and corrosion.

Prestone II Longlife Coolant Concentrate guarantees to keep the heart of the engine functioning correctly, because your vehicle needs a proper level of coolant to effectively pull heat away from the engine.

To Abalos, another unsolicited advice

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

BEFORE THE "Nestlé Case" was the "Tulfo Tiff."

Police said Francisco Philip Bautista was killed over a traffic fight. Bautista, a reserve captain of the Philippine Marine Corps and an engineer of the Nestlé plant on Aurora Boulevard in Quezon City, was shot while driving his Honda Civic on the Nagtahan flyover near Malacañang on April 5. He was southbound, The gunman escaped; witnesses could not identify the plate number of the suspect's vehicle. Police said the suspect's vehicle was a white Toyota Corolla.

Police said Bautista was hit at the back, the bullet exiting in his left armpit. Bautista was dead on arrival at the De Ocampo Memorial Medical Center in Sta. Mesa, Manila, about two hours after the shooting occurred at around 7:30 p.m.

Before the tragedy, witnesses told police horns were blaring from two vehicles both apparently belonging to the victim and the suspect/s, who were seen racing against each other. When the police found Bautista's body slumped behind the wheel of his car, he was holding an unfired gun.

A case of who fired first, who was the real marksman?

Your guess is as good as mine.

But one thing is almost certain: The killing was traffic-related.

So, here's my advice. Fellow motorists, keep calm at all times. Better yet, remove that gun now from your glove compartment if you own one. One bullet can end it all. What a waste. Bautista was only 40 years old. Just like John Lennon when a crazed gunman killed the Chief Beatle on Dec. 8, 1980 in New York City.

* * *

And what about the "Tulfo Tiff?"

Ramon Tulfo and his bodyguards from the Marines almost figured in a shootout with police recently. It happened when the law enforcers were apparently trying to enforce the color-coding law.

Tulfo's vehicle had the authorized plate number that day but not the back-up vehicle bearing his bodyguards.

Tulfo, my fellow columnist here (Metro Section) in case you still don't know, said he and his men averted what would have been a bloody shootout when they disarmed the apprehending policemen.

Before Tulfo and his men made their move, one of the policemen, according to Tulfo, had his armalite poked into the temple of a Marine in an apparently display of arrogance, if not abuse of authority.

Tulfo said he uttered just one word to distract the attention of the policemen, a signal for Tulfo and his men to make their move. In seconds, the policemen had their weapons captured by Tulfo's group. Tulfo and his bodyguards happen to be judo experts. At least two policemen received body blows from Tulfo's men, some of them are karate black belters like Tulfo.

At the headquarters, top police officials defused further tension when they prevailed upon the "aggrieved" policemen to drop charges they had intended to file against Tulfo and his men.

"Just a simple case of misunderstanding" was what the to officials said in dismissing th case.

* * *

I could be wrong, but I surmis the apprehending policemen wer not courteous. For, if they were Tulfo and his men would not hav disarmed them—a supreme insult indeed, to those law enforcers. Aren't our cops required to have lessons in judo, if not karate or wrestling?

Perhaps Tulfo and his men misbehaved, too, after they had bee accosted. Violence begets violence.

But the bottom line is, is it necessary for traffic cops to dish out show of force over a "simple case of traffic violation? Who needs high-powered weapon like a armalite when the issue at hand is mere color-coding infraction?

Almost always, that has been th trouble with most of our traffic enforcers, the cops included. Mostly they are discourteous. Many are arrogant. They love flaunting thei power, using their uniform a badge to intimidate us instead o eradicate lawlessness in the land.

* * *

In the wake of the "Tulfo Tiff," Ben Abalos called on motorist to be calm at all times when apprehended by traffic enforcers.

But while his admonition tha traffic enforcers must be courteous when apprehending motorist is commendable, that is no enough, though. The traffic cza must now seriously consider sending them back to school. From there, they should be ordered t relearn once more the art of goo manners and right conduct.

As a prelude to that, Abalos should issue immediately a directive making it mandatory fo all traffic enforcers to first salut a motorist before starting to cit the motorist's perceived violation. Next, the cop standing a attention in front of the motoris must accompany the salute wit a polite greeting, say, "Goo morning, Sir, or Good morning Madam."

That way, both parties wil start on a cordial note before the start arguing a case presented b the accosting traffic cop.

What do you think, Mr. Chairman?

* * *

Thelma Lozano of Mitsubish Motors Philippines is one lady wh can keep a word. When she say this or that, she translates it int action—come hell or high wate Mel Dizon is lucky to have.Thelm in his.staff. She is one reaso Mitsubishi has been topping th chart sales through the years.

To dear TL, may your tribe increase.

* * *

QUOTE ME: **Many roads in th metropolis, including Edsa, ar not really paved. They are merel either cemented or asphalted improperly that is. If you say road is paved, the ride should b smooth.**

'Auto Madness' set in key cities

BPI Family Bank has scheduled its "Auto Madness" events in key cities around the country.

"Auto Madness" will be held in Davao City on April 18-21; Lipa City, April 19-21; and Iloilo City, April 25-28. It was held in Cebu City, Cagayan de Oro, Bacolod City and Batangas City.

All major car manufacturers will display their latest models for the appreciation of the crowd.

Exclusively during the event dates, BPI Family Bank is set to offer car loans with the lowest interest rates, one-day credit decision and only P30,000 monthly family income to qualify for residents in these cities.

As a further come-on, BPI Family Bank will give qualified auto loan clients a free family vacation package with complimentary breakfast in selected beach resorts nationwide. This is available nationwide through the "Outrageous Outdoors" promo.

Sinski co-sponsors wining, dining event

SINSKI Motorcycle Philippines Inc. recently co-sponsored the "Eat & Drink Ur Heart Out," a dining and wining event held at the third floor of the RCBC Plaza on Ayala Avenue corner Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

Presented by Virtual Events, the affair offered a taste of different local and international cuisines and the finest wines and spirits. Other major sponsors were EAT Food Court and Ralph's Wines & Spirits.

The event also featured a showcase of the exciting new motorcycle models of Sinski, a new player in the industry which offers a complete line of motorcycles ranging from scooters, tricycles and mopeds to big bikes powered by 50 cc to 250 cc (2-stroke or 4-stroke items).

Sinski Motorcycle Philippines Inc. is the sole distributor in the Philippines of Jiangsu Sinski Motorcycle Co. Ltd.

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MOTORING

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

'Unmatched' test taking Superio on 30,000-km spin

By Tessa R. Salazar

DRIVING 1,000 kilometers in a day is no joke. But driving 1,000 km every day for 30 days nearly nonstop must be insane. For the adventurous, however, this long journey hopes to make a point.

Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. revives its 30-day marathon journey that would prove the worthiness of a car in terms of performance, safety, luxury and comfort.

The latest Nissan marathon, the fourth Pan Philippine Marathon, is designed to be a grueling test of performance for any vehicle. It will follow a punishing route all over the Philippines that would challenge even heavy-duty SUVs and 4x4s. Flagging off on April 5, the silver edition Nissan Exalta GS Superio, a 1.6-li electronically controlled 4-speed automatic, hopes to return to Manila by May 5. The event is touted to be unmatched by any car company in the country.

PHILIPPINE Tourism Authority GM Nixon Kua, left, Nissan Motor Philippines president Jack Wu and other executives flag off an all-new Nissan Exalta Superio for an epic, nonstop, 30-day expedition around the country.

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Bathroom stops

Through Philippine highways and on several ferry crossings, the Superio will run practically nonstop, averaging 1,000 km a day for 30 days. This run is not something usually done with an ordinary passenger car.

Four drivers would board Superio every day, and their only "pit stop" would be bathroom stops. After 30 days, the Superio is expected to return to Manila beating the previous Nissan record of 30,586 km. Two Nissan Sentras had already traveled more than 30,000 km in 30 days, the first in 1991 and the second in 1995, running 30,030 and 30,586, respectively.

Sightseeing while driving

Twenty-four drivers have been assembled to alternate at the wheels of the Exalta in a night-and-day island-hopping odyssey. Bus company Philtranco has offered its ferry services in sea crossings.

The NMPI hopes the motoring marathon goes as scheduled and provides the drivers some breathtaking views as they ferry across channels, weave through mountain passes and negotiate unpaved country roads.

The drivers have said they also hope to see frolicking dolphins and whales as they cross the Tanon Strait between Cebu and Negros Islands.

"We have been doing this with my team since 1969.With intrepid drivers and their experiences, we will be back here on the 30th day," said Road Adventures' Willy Ingles, the head of the driving team. Ingles' company includes Any Dysangco, Juvy Catajoy, Mon Dizon and Bebot Roque.

Caltex and Goodyear tires are part of the event. Caltex supplies its Vortex and Havoline oil for the entire run, and will also provide trained mechanics for backup services along the routes where Caltex Xpress Lube stations are situated. Goodyear, meanwhile, is providing both dry and wet weather Eagle Ventura tires.

Are converted cars safe?

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

IN HIS running battle with Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II over the legality of importing and auctioning used motor vehicles, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Felicito Payumo has won the first round by convincing the Department of Justice, the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel and Malacañang that it is legal because Subic is a free port. But he may have a harder time proving that used right-hand-drive (RHD) vehicles converted to left-hand-drive (LHD) are not a public menace on the road.

Auctioneers of imported used vehicles at Subic claim that the converted cars go through "rigid screening" by the Land Transportation Office's Motor Vehicles Inspection Section (MVIS) for compliance with safety and emission standards. But how do they explain the road accidents involving converted auctioned vehicles that ran out of control after the welding of repositioned components came apart? A lot of welding is done in the conversion process.

RHD cars made in Japan are designed for and sold exclusively in Japan or other RHD markets like the United Kingdom, so they are technically and mechanically very different from LHD cars. These major differences make conversion difficult, if not unsafe.

Among the many things that have to be done to convert an RHD car to LHD, the moving around of electricals such as harnesses and switches to accommodate the repositioning of the steering wheel may very well translate into an electrical fire waiting to happen. What's more, a motorist who attended one of these Subic auctions told me that the headlamps are not changed and remain focused on the left side of the road, so at night the light beams target oncoming vehicles instead of lighting the way on the right side of the road for the driver—a perfect setting for an accident.

What is even more disturbing is the lack of quality control and regulation in the conversion of RHD vehicles to LHD. Used RHD vehicles arriving at Subic are brought in container vans to shops outside the Freeport, where they are converted to LHD with the use of welding, epoxy and—they say—conversion kits. But the government has not set up standards and requirements that auto repair shops must meet before they can operate as certified conversion shops. There is reason to worry that the conversion job (cost: P6,000 to P7,000) is done in a rudimentary way by uncertified "oido" mechanics who learn how to do the work in a hit-or-miss way as they go along. There is no guarantee that the engineering work complies with the manufacturer's specifications or that original parts are used to replace the affected parts, especially since the conversion kits reportedly come from Taiwan, not Japan.

Moreover, how does the LTO's MVIS check the converted vehicle's roadworthiness, driveability and compliance with safety and emission standards? Does the MVIS subject the vehicle to a rigorous road test, or is the engine merely made to run for some minutes? Do the MVIS inspectors have the technical know-how to determine whether the conversion was done properly?

Until these safety questions are satisfactorily answered, motorists, commuters and pedestrians alike are advised to stay away from converted auctioned vehicles. The problem is that it is difficult to identify a converted vehicle until you hop into one and see the welding. Meanwhile, the government should remove diesel-fed 10-seater passenger vans from the list of used vehicles that can be legally imported because the auctioneers are exploiting this loophole to include minivans and 4 x 4 sport utility vehicles, many of which are of the same make and model as locally marketed ones.

It's a good thing that the Board of Investments has decided to overhaul the Motor Vehicle Development Program in such a way that the country will comply with its commitments to the World Trade Organization and at the same time lower the cost of car manufacturing. This should make the prices of brand-new cars more competitive. As it is, the auctions of cheaper imported used cars at Subic, Malinta and Valenzuela are cutting into the sales of locally assembled cars and are threatening the survival of the country's automotive industry.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: I'm objective; I object to everything.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla @inquirer.com.ph.

Tips to cool your heads in traffic

By Juan Escandor Jr.

PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

NAGA CITY—Manny Martinez owns a carwash chateau at the corner of Mayon Avenue and Apo Drive going to the Hall of Justice of Camarines Sur. He manages, does technical work and acts as a foreman of the laborers working in his business establishment.

In an ordinary day, he normally goes out of the road in his Honda DU 50 cc at least five times a day to buy spare parts and other needs of his business, passing through the busiest streets in Naga City.

Martinez has observed several principles of traffic conduct and parking ethics being grossly violated, which, he said, endangers pedestrians and drivers alike.

When backing up, he said, it is common to many motorists, who are ignorant of the basic ethical conduct, to display their impatience by driving through the way even as the backing of a vehicle is in progress.

In doing so, this could cause miscalculation on the part of the driver backing up the vehicle because it puts him nearer to danger, given the blind spot on the side of the flowing traffic.

"Basic courtesy dictates that the vehicle in a disadvantaged position is given preferential way and the proper conduct of the driver in the main traffic is to stop, and give enough time to the backing vehicle to maneuver," Martinez advised.

He said knowing this principle and practicing it alone will deter hotheaded traffic altercation that sometimes leads to a shooting between motorists. This practice will also contribute order in the flow of traffic.

Come to think about it. Is it not more orderly if every motorist knows the same rules and principles in a flowing traffic?

Martinez said parking on both sides is allowed in a one-way street traffic. But in a two-way street traffic, parking is allowed only on one side toward the orientation of the flowing traffic.

In the main street traffic situation, the vehicle on the right of the flowing traffic in the perpendicular street should turn right along the traffic flow.

It is only through the flowing traffic could a motorist turn left to follow the counter traffic.

"Skewing the vehicles against the flowing traffic to shortcut to the counter traffic by turning left is not only an acceptable conduct but also an obstacle to the general flow of the main traffic," Martinez explained.

He also observed that there is a total reversal of interpretation of the light signal a motorist exchanges with a fellow motorist in a conflicting direction.

He expressed alarm that the flash light signal executed by a motorist, which means "you go ahead" is commonly interpreted as "I'm going ahead."

Martinez said this is absolutely the other way around based on international standards.

The carwash owner said that for him, respect and precaution should be given to any pedestrian crossing the street, especially when he has already gained the momentum of the strides toward the other side.

Honda holds beauty contest for Civics

HONDA Cars Philippines Inc., together with the Federation of Junior Marketing Association and NecVox Automobile Audio/Video System, presents the "Civic Beauty Contest," a best in car show competition for Honda Civics.

The "Civil Beauty Contest" is open to all bona fide or enrolled students of any college or university and limited to any 2001 Civic variant. This unique beauty contest gives enthusiasts a chance to dress up and show off their youthful, sporty and stylish Civics. The display and awarding of participants will be on April 13 at the Pier One Bar and Grill @ The Fort Square.

At stake in the contest are trips for two to Hong Kong and Boracay, plus other great prizes to be given away. Special awards will also be given to Best in Paint, Best in Engine Display and People's Choice. The car must be registered under the name of the student and/or any immediate family member or up to a first degree relative.

At the same time, all Honda dealerships nationwide will be displaying their own dressed up Civics at their respective showrooms for the professional category of the "Civic Beauty Contest."

Interested students may inquire at their respective Junior Marketing Association office or through the HCPI Customer Relations Group. MBA, Law and Medicine students are disqualified to join.

For more information, call up Abbie or Lee of HCPI Customer Relations Group at 893-9618, fax at 812-6452 or e-mail customer_relations@hondaphil.com.

Cheaper, cleaner fuel now available

By Jun Alano

Contributor

MOTORISTS and public utility drivers fed up with the high prices of fuel now have an alternative as a new and revolutionary line of fuel products—which is not only cheaper but also more environment-friendly—is finally available in the local market.

Developed by award-winning Filipino inventor Rodolfo Lantano, the new fuel products—Lan-Gas Super Premium, Lan-Gas Unleaded and Alco-Diesel—are now in full commercial production after more than 20 years of research, testing and development.

Cheaper fuel

Lan-Gas Super Premium is now sold for P16.28 per liter, the unleaded at P15.43 and Alco-Diesel at P12.79. They are available in Flying V outlets on Legazpi Street, Kalawaan, Shaw Boulevard, and Sandoval Street, all in Pasig City; in Pateros; Antipolo and Cainta, Rizal; Valenzuela; and Araneta Avenue and Balon-Bato in Quezon City.

They are also available in Lan-Gas outlets in Paliparan, Dasmariñas, Cavite; General Trias and Alfonso towns, also in Cavite; M. L. Quezon Street, Bicutan, Taguig; and F. Legazpi Street, Pasig.

INVENTOR Rodolfo Lantano

Cleaner fuel

Aside from his commercial fuel products, Lantano is also the inventor of the Super Bunker Formula-L, a combination of 50 percent water and 50 percent bunker-C fuel commonly used in industries. The Super Bunker Formula-L burns more efficiently and cuts harmful emissions by as much as 95 percent.

Developed in the backyard of the Department of Science and Technology compound in Taguig, the Alco-Diesel, Lan-Gas regular fuel and the Super Bunker Formula-L blends present a very good alternative to the country's industrial and commercial fuel requirements during these times of rising fuel costs.

Lantano won the World Intellectual Property Organization (Wipo) gold medal during the 1996 National Inventors' Week for his Super Bunker Formula-L and for the machines he developed in mixing his new formulations.

Lantano said his company, RL Enterprises, is allowed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to produce two million liters of Alco-Diesel, two million liters of Lan-Gas and an unlimited quantity of Super Bunker Formula-L daily.

Safe process

Lantano said his fuel lines are the result of blending new ingredients and additives with ordinary oil products through agitation and mixing, which is a very safe process. He added that he also does not use heat in the blending process and thus there is no waste by-product that may pollute the environment.

Alco-diesel, an alternative to ordinary diesel fuel, is a mixture of denatured alcohol and diesel. If used extensively on a nationwide level, it has the potential of displacing three million barrels of ordinary diesel fuel annually and therefore reduce diesel importation, as well as reduce harmful emissions.

Lan-Gas, on the other hand, is made up of gasoline, denatured alcohol and additives. It gives a smoother combustion due to high cetane index rating and limits the possibility of engine overheating.

For feedback, text us at (0918)917-5026 or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

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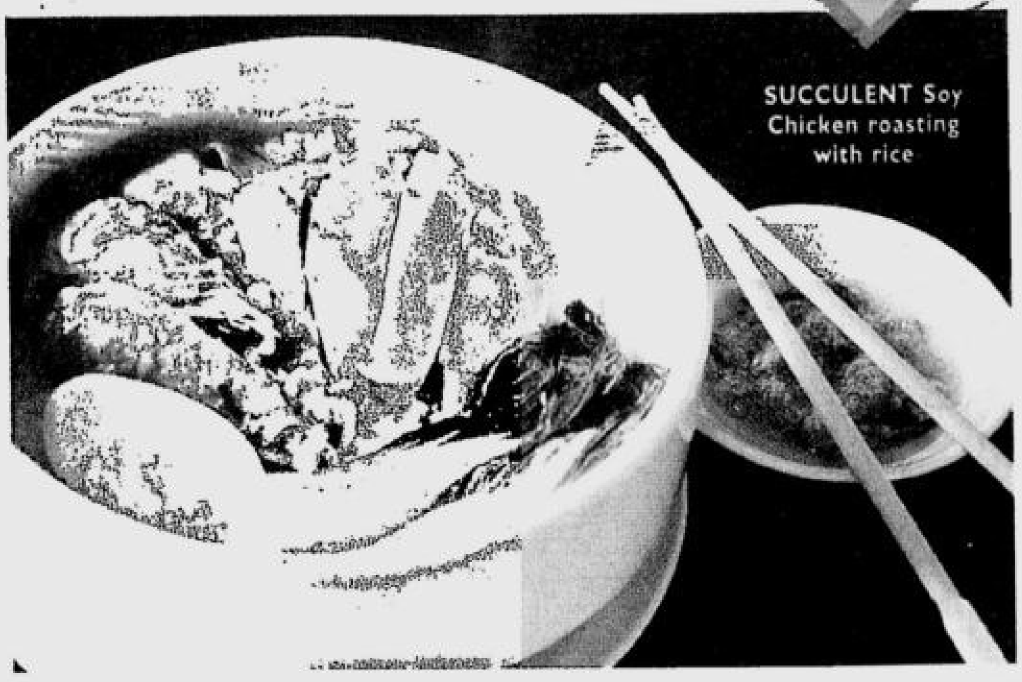
Den of dimsum

STORY ON PAGE C2



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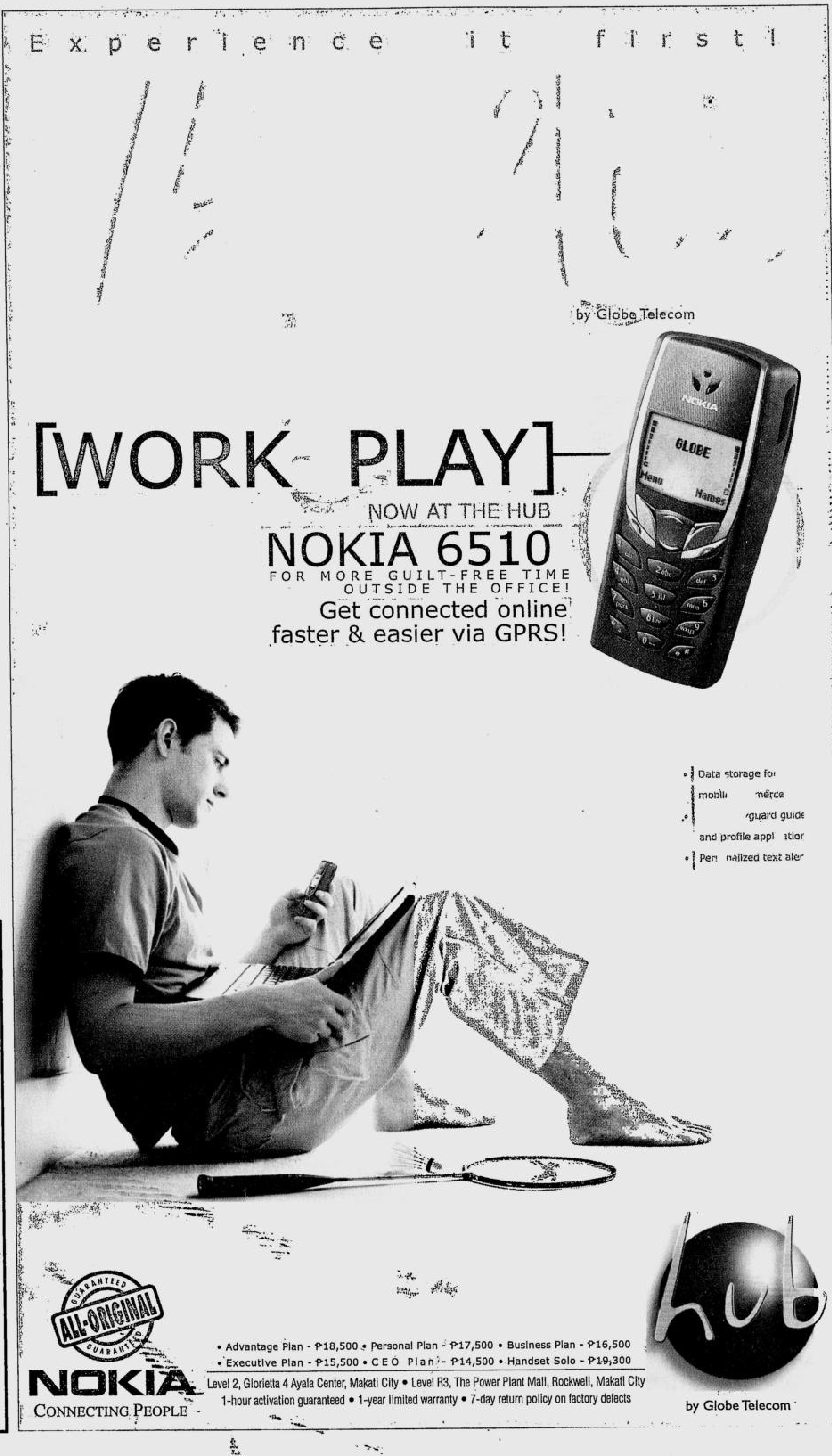

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Den of dimsum

Text and photos by Cathy Babao Guballa

A restaurant, reminiscent of old tea houses in Hong Kong, serves a variety of tasty dimsum

THERE is an uncanny similarity about Dondi Oñate and the logo of his fast-growing chain of Chinese restaurants. "That's really me," he says. His chinky eyes disappear as he breaks into a smile. Oñate is Mr. Dimsum and vice versa. This young entrepreneur likes to joke that he was born at a time when being a chef was not yet a popular career choice. A "frustrated chef," he now finds himself concocting dishes at his three Mr. Dimsum restaurants in Quezon City. He has been in the food business for almost four years now.

The clean and cozy Mr. Dimsum serves a wide array of tasty and very affordable cuisine, which represents various regions in China. There is, expectedly, a wide selection of dimsum, short order food (samples) and a host of fresh, made-from-scratch fruit juices. "Our market is typically middle-income to high middle-income," Oñate says. He also runs the popular Cucina Bacolod at Tektite Towers in Ortigas that caters mostly to "rank-and-file" employees.

Oñate has a feel for his market and says with pride that in his restaurants, people get "overvalue for money." That's defined as delicious food in large portions (which can feed an army) offered at prices that don't bust your pockets. Consider, for example, an order of Kung Pao chicken at P140, which can feed a family of four. Add a serving of Mr. Dimsum fried rice at P80 plus Polon Chai with garlic at P155 and tasty Mr. Dimsum's buchi for dessert at P40. That's P415 for lunch or dinner for a family of four or five.

MR. DIMSUM. Dondi Oñate

Like most Chinese restos, Mr. Dimsum is filled with big families on weekends and the working class on weekdays. Celebrities are often seen here, too. Ara Mina frequents the place and swears allegiance to Mr. Dimsum Fried Bread. Boy Abunda goes a-buzz over Ha-Kao (shrimp dumpling). Hair and makeup stylist James Cooper goes to the Hemady branch where he partakes of steamed fish with toasted garlic, beef brisket on rice or the special *siomai*. A top government official from the North comes to the restaurant thrice a week just to savor Mr. Dimsum Congee. Indeed, the business has been a success that in less than a year, Oñate opened three restaurants in various spots in Quezon City (Hemady Street, Katipunan Avenue, West Avenue and soon on Congressional Avenue).

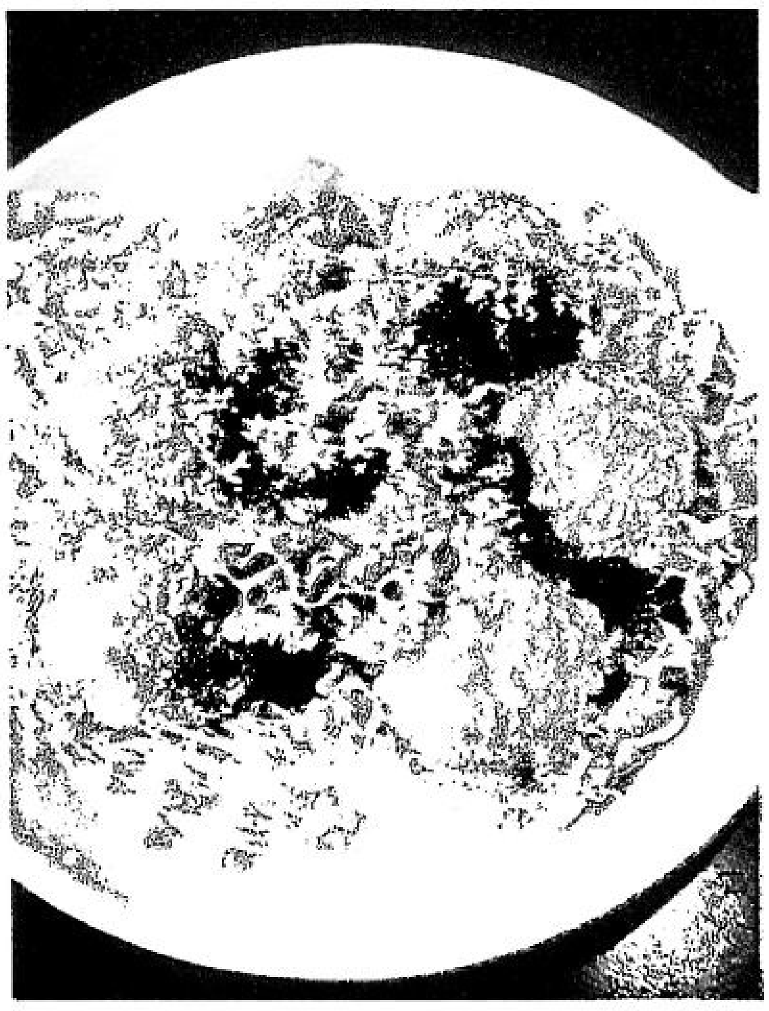
The two-story restaurant on Katipunan Avenue has a Western flare, but it does not lose the authenticity of its Chinese origins. Its interiors are reminiscent of the old tea houses in Hong Kong.

"Filipinos just love Chinese food," Oñate says. "In fact, Chinese dishes have become as staple as *adobo* in every Filipino home." he adds. For a healthy twist, the restaurant only uses soya oil in all its dishes. All outlets have the traditional Dimsum/Roasting carts, which bring products to guest tables. The restaurants are open daily, 11 a.m. to midnight, and on weekends, until 3 a.m.

So the next time you have a hankering for honest-to-goodness dimsum or no-fuss Chinese food at strange hours, head for the restaurant with the logo of a chinky-eyed man. He'll surely satisfy your cravings.

E-mail the author at cbguballa@inquirer.com.ph

DIMSUM delights


SHRIMP Balls

POLONCHAI with roasted garlic

Celebrating the Filipino's love for rice

"CAN I have an extra rice?" is one request you're not likely to hear at the Kitchen during its Rice Festival. And it's not because the dishes don't deserve an extra helping of rice. On the contrary, its 12 new rice dishes are so delicious that the Kitchen took it upon itself to put in extra rice on your platter.

The portions are equivalent to a cup-and-a-half of rice (one dish has two cups)—after all, this is a festival that celebrates the Filipino's love for rice and his penchant for asking for a little bit more than what's served.

Like its pasta dishes, Kitchen's new rice dishes are familiar favorites but cooked differently to make them distinct. They're given unique names, too.

Take the *sinigang*, for example. It's called Salmon Says (P180). Its main ingredient is salmon head and comes with *misu*, which gives it that extra thickness.

Another Filipino favorite is *bistek Tagalog*. Kitchen's version, Too Good It's So True (P139), uses salmon belly. The fish variety of *bistek* is nothing new, except it usually uses *bangus*, not salmon.

Another seafood dish to delight both big eaters and calorie counters is See Food Delight (P159), which combines shrimps, clams and fish in Thai *gata* or coconut milk. If you like your fish a little simpler, there's Buttered Up (P160), the fresh catch of the day with creamy lemon butter sauce.

For chicken lovers, there's Loose Leggings (P190). Served with soy sauce, chili and ginger sauce, this Hainanese Chicken Rice version stays true to Singapore's favorite dish with imported sauces.

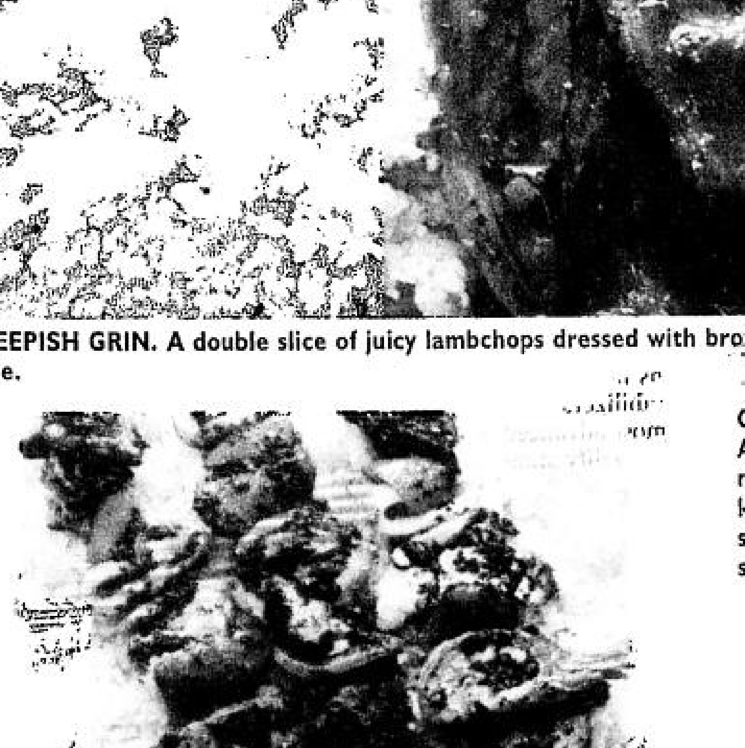
For meat eaters who like their food heavy, Ribbit (P180) is deep-fried spareribs mixed with garlic sauce.

If you're craving for barbecue, choose On Barbie's Cue (P149). It has skewered chicken beef and fish and seafood with pesto. Grounded for Life (P120) is *arroz à la cubana* on a mound of rice (two cups for this one), also a favorite among customers. Shawshank Redemption (P195) is the tasty Italian *osso bucco* or beef shank with peppercorn sauce. Sirloin Swirloin (P195), grilled sirloin with a swirl of sweet-salty demi glaze, is for steak lovers. The most expensive rice dish (but well worth it) is Sheepish Grin (P295), a double slice of juicy lamb chops dressed with brown sauce and red wine.

The festival introduces two new items on the menu. A sample plate of appetizers that consists of the Kitchen's bestsellers: seared tuna, *uni* and US corn. There's also an addi-

"Expect something new from us always and not just for Kitchen," says Rikki Dee, who owns Kitchen with Ricco Ocampo. "That's what this partnership is all about. We want to try a new concept: a casual dining Japanese restaurant called Sake, which is being constructed at Glorietta 2. And like Kitchen, the restaurant

SHEEPISH GRIN. A double slice of juicy lambchops dressed with brown sauce and red wine.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PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF FASHION

Underground amethysts

From page C4

mashed, mixed with milk and sugar and sometimes coconut milk) is essential to the fiesta table.

Pastillas de ube, rolled in fine white sugar and wrapped in paper are miraculous, whether homemade or from San Miguel de Mayumo, town of sweetness. The *putong ube* of Renee Lopez and her daughters was motivated by a mother's desire to pleasure her family, and it is an urban classic.

DENNIS Hipolito, ***ube* cake chef**

It is essential to *ube* ice cream, whether from "dirty" ice cream carts or Selecta or Magnolia. It is now also found in *hopia* and *butchi* in Chinatown, and in cakes in various bakeries. Creative contemporary chefs like Gene Gonzalez and Glenda Barretto have their way with it, too, as in his Ube Vichysoisse, hot or cold, and in her *ube* noodles (in packs, or cooked at her Via Mare or food fairs abroad).

Giron Foods Inc., led by Francisco M. Giron Jr., president (P.O. Box 8064, Parañaque Central Post Office; tels. 824-0414, 823-3560; e-mail girongrp@info.com.ph), now manufactures it in powdered form. *Ube* has "a fair amount of iron and has been found to be a good source of Vitamins B and C, fiber and a substantial amount of minerals and nutrients," and the powdered form makes it accessible to Filipinos here and abroad for cakes and pastries, ice cream, pasta and other dishes.

To promote his premiere product, Giron has participated in local and international food fairs and exhibitions, conducted cooking demonstrations in food stores in the United States and elsewhere, and linked up with farmers, cooperatives, schools and agricultural entrepreneurs in the farming of purple yam. The company has also worked closely with restaurants, bakeshops and other food establishments.

In its growing list of food products (cassava, *camote*, *gabi*, banana, squash, *macapuno*, *langka*, *kaong*, *nata de coco*; pickled papaya, *ampalaya*, *kangkong*, mango and hot peppers), we find as well cakes and pastries, Filipino delicacies and cakes.

At lunch, we met Dennis Hipolito, Giron chef-consultant, and tasted a delicious procession of *ube* cakes he had designed and prepared. The Ube Chiffon Cake with Macapuno was light and friendly. The Macapuno Flan with Ube Bavaroise was rich and enticing. The decadent Ube with Butter Cream was the richest, most "sinful" for diabetics like me, but the most luscious.

"To die for," judged the rest of the diners—worth feasting on and fasting for later, in reparation.

Who but we Filipinos can know all this, and experience all these delights within one lifetime? From the little ice-cream cones of childhood, to the *haleyang ube* of fiestas, to the *ube* glories (*pastillas*, cakes, *puto*, *hopia*, *butchi*) of our lives, this humble root lays all on our tables, for our delectation.

The underground amethysts of our food culture have no analogues elsewhere. To us they are a metaphor for the goodness in Philippine culture that lies quietly hidden, glowing only for us.

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Soup for weary souls

THE AMERICAN kitchen had not known the convenience of thick flavorful soups, until J.T. Dorrance of Campbell Soup Co. introduced them to the market. Campbell soups immediately clicked among homemakers.

Even more enticing was the convenience of Dorrance's soups. Heating a can of Campbell soup turned out to be more cost-effective than cooking soup from scratch.

The soup is delicious, nutritious (made only of the freshest ingredients) and sanitary. These qualities were all affirmed by Ann Lewis Pierce, a highly esteemed culinary authority who wrote about Campbell for the New York Tribune.

Campbell's integral place in the American way of life was brought to the forefront by postmodernist painter Andy Warhol in the 1960s. When asked what he thought of tomato soup, Warhol retorted, "I love it." He added that his mother had served it to him daily.

Today, Campbell soup, the No. 1 condensed soup in America, has found its way into the Filipino home with Cream of Mushroom Soup and Chicken Soup. It combines nutrition with convenience, the perfect midday or after-dinner snack to soothe and satiate demanding appetites. Sample the variety of rich and flavorful Campbell soups: Tomato, Cream of Mushroom, Chicken, among others.

Vinegar that adds zest to Pinoy dishes

VINEGAR is famous as a flavoring for Pinoy dishes. The *paombong* variety is an example.

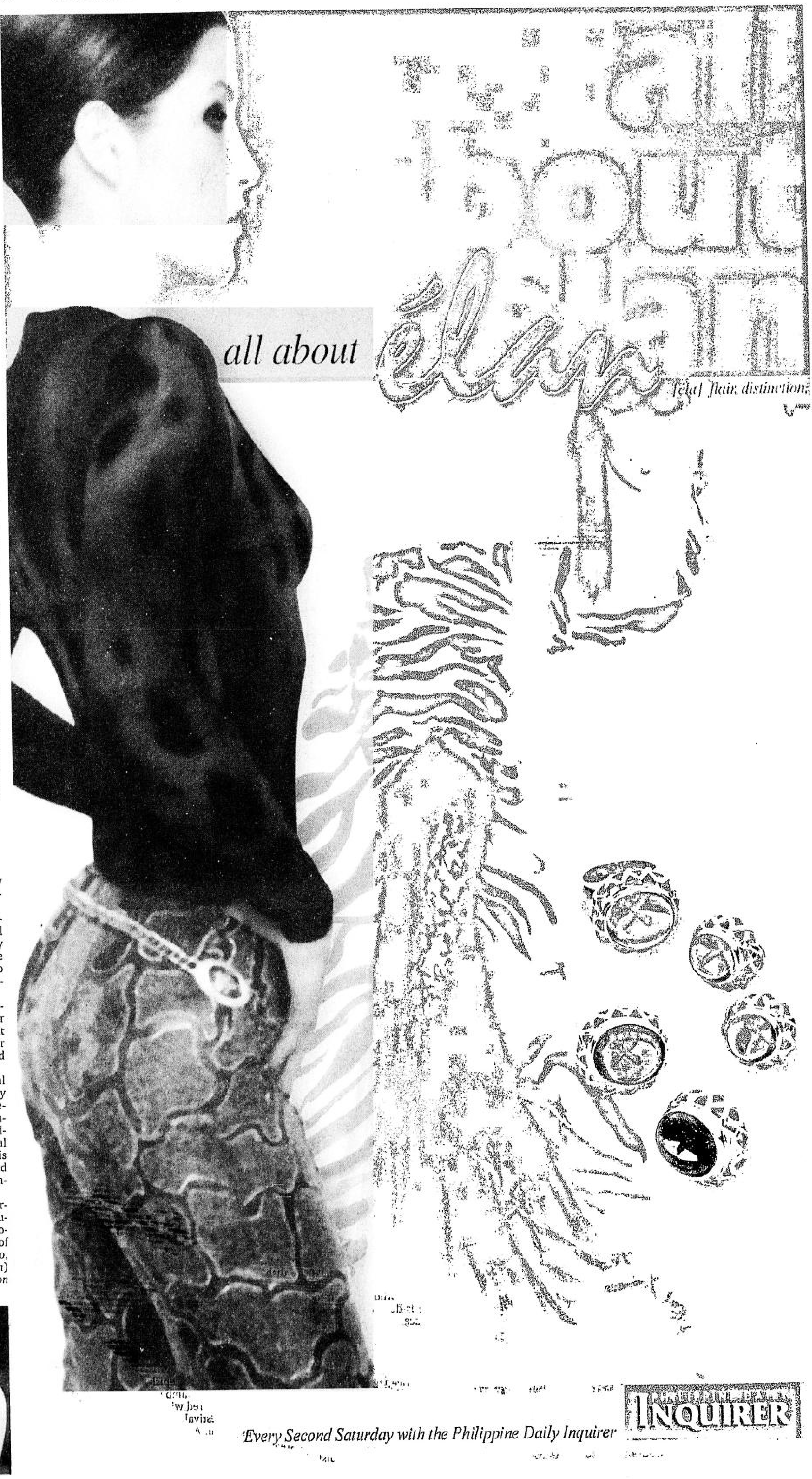
Lorenzana Food Corp. (LFC) launches Filtaste Original Sukang Paombong in the local market. The product was first introduced by LFC in the export market decades ago, and the company has decided to market this in Metro Manila, where this vinegar is already extensively used.

Filtaste Original Sukang Paombong is another condiment brand similar to LFC's other products that have gained success abroad. It is the latest addition to LFC's Filtaste vinegar line, which includes Pure Cane Vinegar and Sukang Anghang.

The product is produced from the natural fermentation of *nipa* sap. The technology comes from Paombong, Bulacan, which became famous for producing this type of vinegar. Like other LFC products, Filtaste Original Sukang Paombong contains no artificial coloring, preservatives and stabilizers. It is bottled and sealed using the most advanced technology, following strictest quality standards.

Filtaste Original Sukang Paombong is perfect for cooking and as a condiment in restaurants, eateries and Pinoy homes. The new product was formulated to enhance the taste of famous Filipino dishes such as *paksiw*, *adobo*, *kinilaw*, barbecue, and as a dip (*sawsawan*) for meals and snacks like *lumpia*, *chicharon* and many more.

SUKANG PAOMBONG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Underground amethysts

IN GOOD TASTE

Doreen G. Fernandez

'Ube' is a metaphor for the goodness in Philippine culture that lies quietly hidden, glowing only for us

WHAT is amethyst-colored, from pale lavender to deep purple, is found underground and a star in the firmament of Philippine food culture?

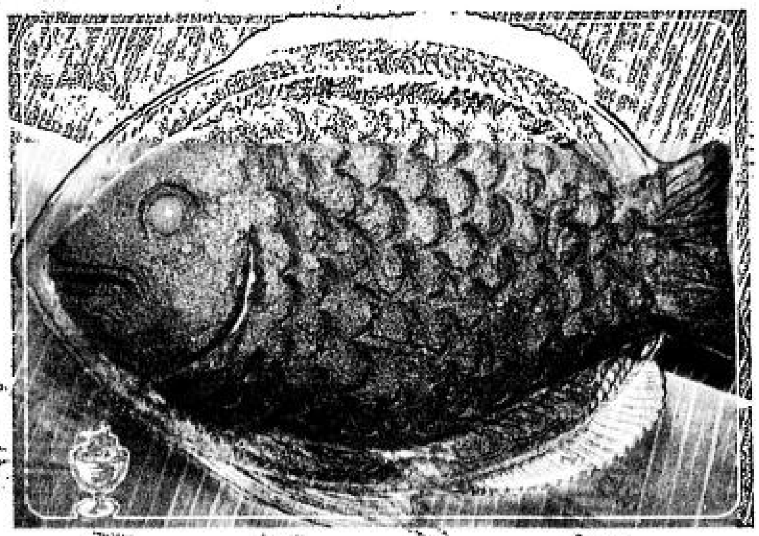
Why, *ube/ubi*, of course. It is known as the purple yam in English, but is also unknown, because it does not seem to occur in other yam-growing countries in the way it has taken root and grown in the Philippines. The heftily authoritative book by Elizabeth Schneider, "The Essential Reference: Vegetables from Amaranth to Zucchini" (HarperCollins, 2001), offers yams galore (*name* in Spanish; *igname* in French), but admits that our purple yam was encountered in Hawaii, where it was labeled "*ube* in a Philippine grocery and both *ratala* and *kand* in an Indian one."

Schneider sighted the genuine thing, which she describes thus: "Cut, the raw flesh glows lavender violet—and it turns a rich, mottled, deep red-violet when cooked. Peeled and boiled, the smooth uniform flesh is almost juicy compared with that of other yams—as if crossed with a sweet *rutabaga*. Gently sweet, with a touch of smokiness, meatiness and nuttiness—but really none of these—purple yam is its own curious, moist, fork-tender self."

We know it scientifically and in all its native glory and expressions. Patricia Arroyo ("The Science of Philippine Foods," 1974) and P.J. Wester ("The Food Plants of the Philippines," 1924), identify it as *Dioscorea alata L*, with such local names as *ipoi*, *luktu* and *polog*, as well as *ubi*. It is found all over the country, and that of Bohol is particularly good. The best, I said in amazement when I first smelled Boholano *kinampay*, like a field of ripening grain.

We are, of course, privileged to know closely, as well, all its expressions and interpretations in our culture. *Haleyang ube* (boiled,

UNDERGROUND/ p.C3



HALEYANG ube by Ilustrado

PHOTO FROM "FIESTA PHILIPPINES RECIPE"

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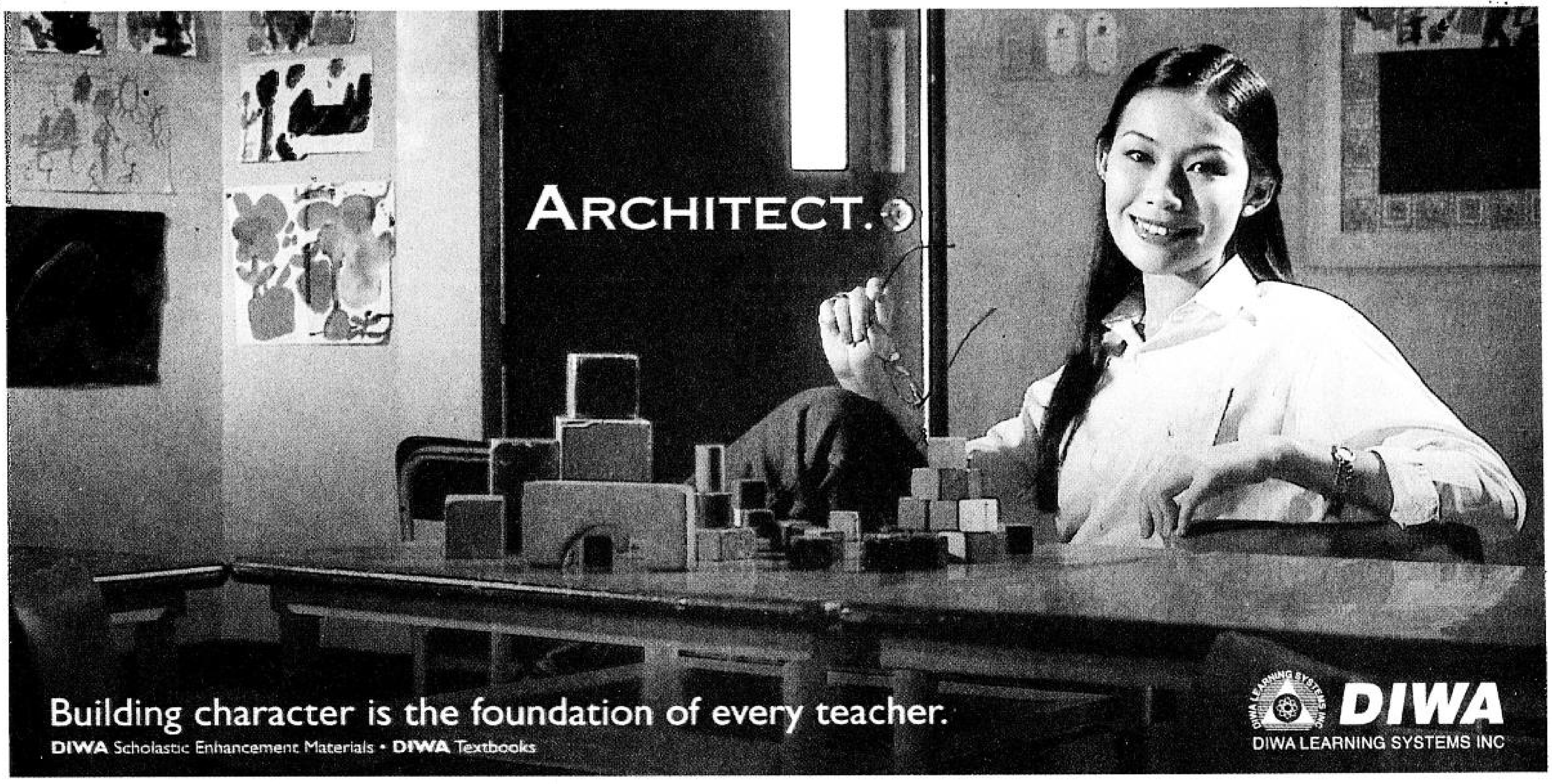

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